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...bum of Indian Paintings

MULK RAJ ANAND

NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA

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Images precede ideas. Pictures do not illustrate poems. They are poems by analogy. Colours, lines and forms lead us to the silent areas of our inner life, giving us insights, intensifying our emotions, extending our consciousness.

In the *Album of Indian Paintings* Dr. Mulk Raj Anand has reproduced significant pictures from the earliest cave paintings of India till the 19th century. He has tried to show the continuity of the over two thousand years' old tradition by presenting links between one period and another.

Dr. Mulk Raj Anand is an eminent Indian humanist writer. A former Chairman of the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, he is Editor of the well-known art journal, Marg, and author of a number of books on the arts.

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Preface

This album is a modest effort to encourage appreciation of Indian paintings by reproducing the most significant pictures done in each phase of our history. Sometimes scholars deplore the fact that there is very little recorded evidence about the ancient and mediaeval periods of our country. In the case of the arts, however, I think we can make a virtue out of this lacunae. For the fewer words we use about paintings and sculpture, the better it is for those who come afresh to *look* at pictures, with the two eyes of natural human curiosity, and to *see* with the inner eye of the desire for beauty.

As a matter of fact, I believe, that the emphasis on words (and ideas) in our tradition has, for a long time, stood in the way of our genuine understanding of *images*. One of the important recent critics of Indian art has aptly said that even when our artists illustrate a poem or story, 'the picture no more illustrates the verse than the verse describes the picture: both express the sentiment (*rasa*) of the moment chosen.' (Basil Gray, *Rajput Painting*, Faber, 1951). The picture, or the expression of vision, through colour and line, releases *Rasas*, while words suggest meaning and may lead to *Rasas*. From this point of view, a painting or a sculpture may, perhaps, be appreciated by writing a parallel poem about it. But the *pictorial situation* of each painting is important, if it is integral to its form, to its adumbration of mood, its composition, and if it stimulates our body-soul.

If the painting was merely an idea, the painter could write down only a word-title and need not have used colour, line and form. The scientific historical knowledge, afforded by patient scholars, who dig up archaeological evidence, or describe the iconography, or interpret philosophical and social theories, or quarrel about the dates of pictures, though important, is only necessary as background material. We are grateful to the many scholars, historians and philosophers, who have now provided a fairly continuous story of the development of painting in our country. Without their help no such book as this could be compiled. But new generations will find their enjoyment in the works of art, in the technical skill by which the expression has been organised, and the rhythms and the energies, and the *Rasa-Bhavas,* created in the onlooker. Therefore, this monograph is more a pictorial album of Indian paintings than a critical study.

Actually, though the general history of Indian painting is now more or less clear, there are many acute differences in interpretation of exact dates, provenance and influence. I have tried to put down mostly the evidence which is agreed upon among many of the art historians. Anyhow, the words here may be read as marginal notes on the paintings.

I wish to express my appreciation of the help I have received throughout the printing work from Shri R. Subbu, Kumari Dolly Sahiar and Shri Kewal Anand in the collation of images, in the layout and production. Shri S. I. Clarke helped with the proofs.

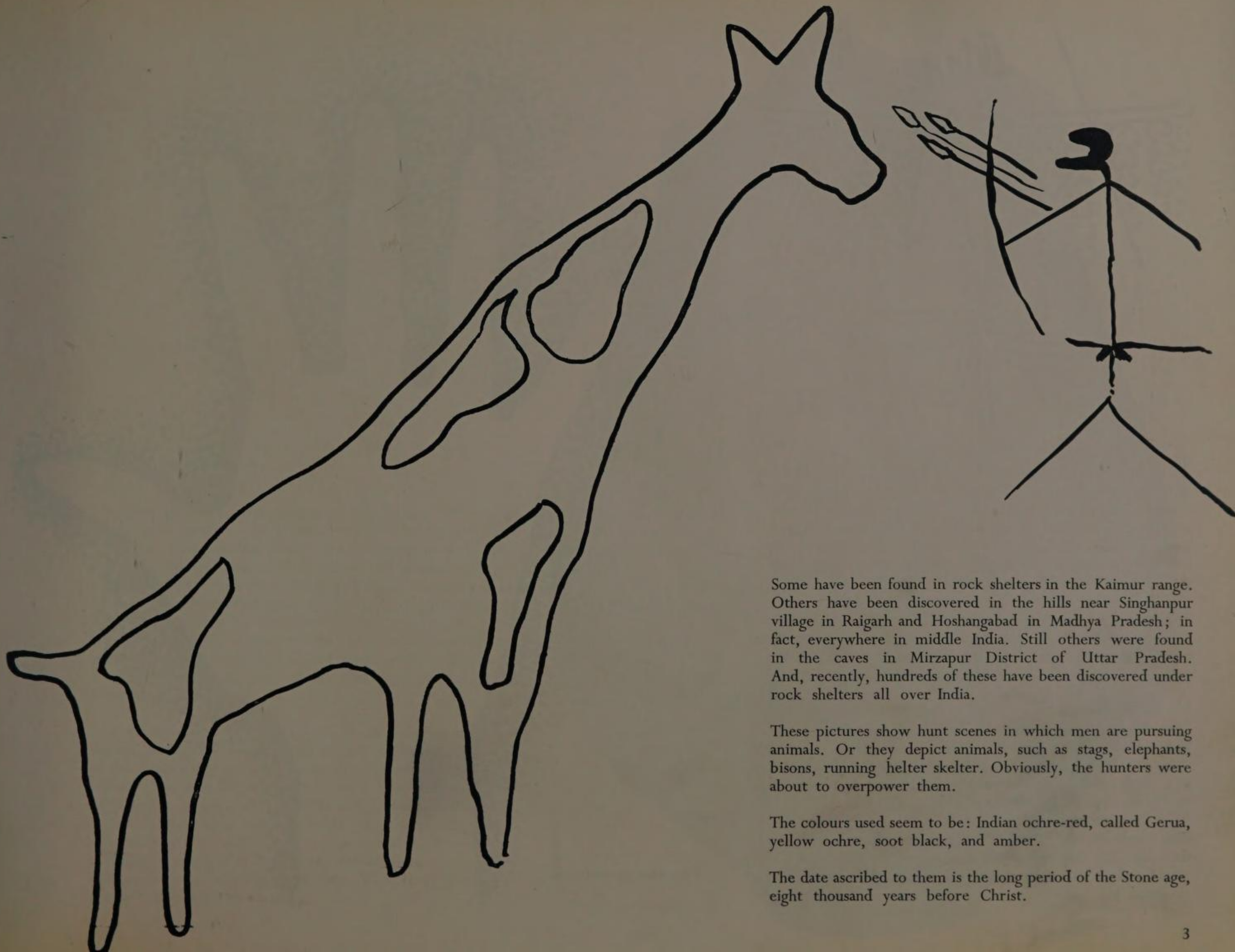
Khandalla, 1971-72 M.R.A.

1. Pre-historic

Our great-great-great grandfathers were able to achieve these bold pictures of their daily life. They covered large cave surfaces, with free, sweeping brush strokes, as a kind of ritual before going out to hunt.

Of the earliest surviving paintings in India, there are some vital drawings of wild animals, in cave shelters, in different parts of our country. Seemingly simple, sharp and energetic, they are 'action' pictures.

Pre-historic action pictures. Cave paintings, Mirzapur, Hoshangabad, Mtoko Africa and Altamira Spain

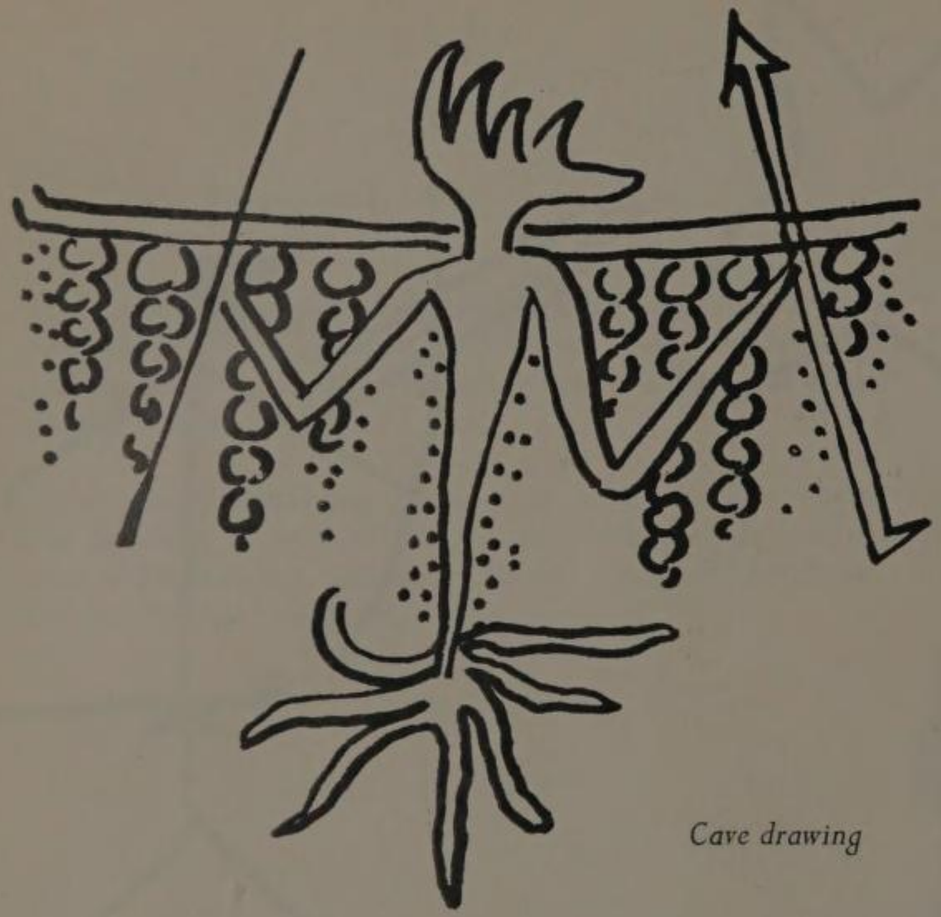


Some have been found in rock shelters in the Kaimur range. Others have been discovered in the hills near Singhanpur village in Raigarh and Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh; in fact, everywhere in middle India. Still others were found in the caves in Mirzapur District of Uttar Pradesh. And, recently, hundreds of these have been discovered under rock shelters all over India.

These pictures show hunt scenes in which men are pursuing animals. Or they depict animals, such as stags, elephants, bisons, running helter skelter. Obviously, the hunters were about to overpower them.

The colours used seem to be: Indian ochre-red, called Gerua, yellow ochre, soot black, and amber.

The date ascribed to them is the long period of the Stone age, eight thousand years before Christ.



Cave drawing

As stone-grinders have been found, among the implements in the cave deposits, we can guess that they ground the earth colours. They powdered the stones and then mixed the powder with animal fat. They heated the mixture over fire. And then they applied it, quickly, with a brush, onto the rock surface, before the hot colour cooled down. This technique by itself made for swift sweeping movements of the brush.

The real purpose of our primitive ancestors in drawing animals seems to have been to do *magic*. Before killing the beast in the jungle, they used to draw the hunt scene on the rock. They believed this would bring them victory.

The pre-historic paintings, found in India, are similar to those discovered in Altamira Caves in Spain, in Lascaux in France, and in Mtoko in Southern Rhodesia.

It is likely, then, that the people of the Stone Age belonged to the same stock all over the world.

The simplicity, the vitality and the drama of these primitive drawings, has inspired some of the greatest artists of the world today. So it has been said that modern art is fifty thousand years old.

Cave drawing open hand

2. Earliest Historical Paintings (1500 B.C.)

Mohenjodaro-Harappa-Maheshwar-Navdatoli-Lothal

The grain from the field was stored in large jars. Water was drunk from pitchers, or Surahis, with cups. Cooked food was eaten from earthen plates. The craftsmen seem to take pride in making these earthen vassels. All artisans seem to want to make a thing well, when they make it; they want it to be shapely and splendorous, so that it can give delight. That is, perhaps, why the potter began to paint the pots. He drew triangles, squares, circles. Also, he indicated birds, animals and human beings. These were probably symbolic drawings of magic figures, symbol, and signs, to show that everything has a life.

The recently discovered cities of Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Rupar, Maheshwar and Navdatoli give authentic evidence of the Bronze Age culture, thousands of years after the Stone culture. The date when this civilisation flourished has been suggested at about 2500 to 1500 B.C. Although the sites on which these finds stand are within the boundaries of our sub-continent, the art objects discovered there are similar to those of Sumeria in Arabia and the Mediterranean civilisations. So some scholars think that this ancient culture is not part of Indian culture at all.

Pot from Mohenjodaro

Seal from Mohenjodaro

The history of the transition from the crude Stone Age, to the polished Stone Age, to the Copper Age, and the Iron Age, is not very clear. They seem to overlap each other. And though we can say that the earliest known civilisation of India was part of the Mediterranean complex, which stretched from Northern India across West Asia to Norway, we can also say that it is part of Indian history, because it flourished on the sub-continent of India.

The tools and implements, found in the above mentioned cities, show a clear advance. The hunting of animals as the main source of food had given place to the tilling of the soil. Therefore, man has become more selfconsciously skilful. For skill is one of the main keys to civilisation or orderly living: the more skill man has the more he can absorb nature. And a higher command of technique often makes for a wider culture. Thus many crafts like pottery, carpentry and smithy, became possible in the Indus Valley civilisation.

Mohenjodaro Man

Curvacious line of the back of Harappa Torso

As the souls of the dead were supposed to go to heaven after death, the pots were often buried with them. Dead children were also put in the pots and then lowered into the graves. So the pictures on the pots may have been magic formulas, to help the dead to get to heaven quickly.

If there were any other images in paint, they must have been like those which appear in terracotta figures and the bronze sculpture of dancer in Mohenjodaro and the fine Harappa torsos with its volumes and curvacious line.

Again, hundreds of years pass, before we get to the next datable paintings, in about the first century, B.C.

Jogimara Caves

The paintings have been found in the Jogimara Caves of the Ramgarh hills in Sirgujja, Madhya Pradesh.

Unfortunately, they have been restored by clumsy hands. So the original pictures are spoilt. But, after careful work, it has been found that they were designed as wall paintings. The subjects treated are houses, animals and human figures. The forms were like those of sculpture in the same period. They were in round panels. But, on the borders, fishes, man-lions and water monsters, were repeated.

But these wall paintings of Ramgarh hill were in crude brushwork. Perhaps, finer pictures were done in the same area, or elsewhere. Those have not survived. Only, the pictures show that the tradition of paintings on the walls was habitual. Colours were made from stone and earth and fixed with natural adhesives.

The climate of India was not suitable for the preservation of paintings. Apart from the weather, perhaps the white ant often ate into the colours. And the dripping of water into the caves, destroyed the plaster on which the paintings were often done.

The wood and brick used in houses and palaces were even less lasting than the rocks. Therefore, the paintings in these buildings have also been lost.

There are glowing accounts of wonderful paintings in picture galleries, palaces and temples. We can, therefore, surmise that profuse artwork in colour and line flourished during this time.

3. Ancient Myths and Legends

सुधृष्टमे वपुष्येइ न रोदसी पिता यत्सीमभि रूपैरवासयत् ॥

पुरन्धिर्योषेत्याह । योषित्येव रूपं दधाति । तस्माद्यां युवतिः प्रिया भावुका ।
Tai. Brāh. III, viii, 13, 2.

चित्रद्विपाः पद्मवनावतीर्णाः करेणुभिर्दत्तमृणालभङ्गाः ।
नखाङ्कुशाघातविभिन्नकुम्भाः संरब्धसिंहप्रहृतं वहन्ति ॥
Raghuvaṁśa, XVI, 16.

विद्युत्वन्तं ललितवनिताः सेन्द्रचापं सचित्राः ।
....प्रासादास्त्वां तुलयितुमलम् ॥ Meghadūta, II, 1.

नववधूं प्रति सतीवृत्तशिक्षणार्थं कापि बन्धुवधूराह—

दिअरस्स असुद्धमणस्स कुलवहूणिअअकुड्डलिहिआइं ।
दअहं कहेइ रामाणुलग्गसोमित्ति चरिआइं ॥
[देवरस्याशुद्धमनसः कुलवधूर्निजककुड्यालिखितानि ।
दिवसं कथयति रामानुलग्नसौमित्रिचरितानि ॥]
Gāthāsaptaśatī, I, 35.

As is well-known, our ancestors did not write much history. They considered ideas more important than facts. Our modern historians prefer exact dates.

But we have many myths and legends. Myths satisfy the inner desire for images about our expectations of wonderful happenings in life. They have remote connections with real things. Thus they are unreal but suggestive. If we consider myths to be symbolic, then the charming stories contained in them are useful. For a myth shows the urge to be great, or beautiful, or heroic.

In one pretty legend, it is told that the supreme God Brahma Himself created painting. The story goes that the great God taught a king how to bring back the life of the dead son of one of his subjects. Brahma made a portrait of the young boy. Then he put life into the picture. So the youth became alive. This fable about infusing *prana*, or lifebreath, into a picture, was invented to teach Indian artists that only when they infuse the lifebreath into their works, can they be considered skilful. Also, as Brahma was the highest and most revered God of early Hindu religion, the creator himself, the story of his being the creator of painting gave to the use of colour a divine sanction.

In the *Rig Veda*, the Lord of form is mentioned as fashioning *form* and creating beauty. And the two worlds are like fair girls.

In the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, there are various references to great painted halls of the ancient period. This shows that there may have been wall paintings like those in Jogimara caves and in the picture galleries of the Ajanta caves which came to be painted afterwards.

In the *Vinaya Pitha*, a Buddhist book in Pali language, of the 3rd or 4th century B.C., there are references to the pleasure houses of the king Pasanadas, which contained halls, the walls of which were adorned with painted figures and decorative patterns.

We gain the impression that wall paintings, *Bhitti Chitra*, was the most popular form of art. Community life, or joint living, being convenient for religious purposes, the myths of the faith could be communicated to people more easily

com: दिअरस्सेति। अयमाशयः—कुलस्त्रिया रामायणवृत्तान्तं गृहभित्तौ विलिख्य तत्र विमातृजेऽपि रामे सभार्येऽनुलग्नानि लक्ष्मणस्य चरित्राणि कथयित्वा दुष्टहृदयो देवरः प्रत्याख्येयः, न तु प्रकटम्। कुटुम्बविघट-नादिभयादिति भावः ॥

भित्तिचित्रलिखिताखिलक्रमा यत्र तस्थुरितिहाससंकथाः ।

अपेतमान्यशोभान्यप्यसंमृष्टाजिराणि च ।
देवागाराणि शून्यानि न चाभान्ति यथापुरम् ॥
देवतार्चाः प्रविद्धाश्च यज्ञगोप्त्र्यस्तथाविधाः ॥

Rāmāyaṛ

प्रत्यग्रलिखितमङ्गल्यालेख्योज्ज्वलितभित्तिभागमनोहारिणि ।

Kādambarī, p. 136.

दिवसावसानेषु विश्लेषभीता मृणालसूत्रैश्चित्राभित्तिविलिखितानि चक्रवाक-मिथुनानि संघटयति । *Ibid.*, p. 446.

सुप्तया वासभवने चित्रभित्तिचामरग्राहिण्योऽपि चामराणि चालयांचक्रुः ।

Harṣacarita, p. 127.

उद्यानमभिपश्यन्तो भ्रातरः सर्व एव ते ॥
उपस्थानगृहैः शुभ्रैर्वलभीभिश्च शोभितम् ।
गवाक्षकैस्तथा जालैर्यन्त्रैः सञ्चारिकैरपि ॥
संमार्जितं सौधकारैश्चित्रकारैश्च चित्रितम् ।

Ādi I

through paintings on the walls. So the covering of large walls became the basis of the tradition of painting in India. A king of the 6th century A.D., refers to his unsuccessful policies as 'painting, without substance, of the walls'. And the Kashmiri poet, Rajashekhara, in his *Sahitya Mimansa*, puts painters and carvers, *Chitra Lapya-krit*, in the category of the poets of the *Apabhramsa*, the common spoken language of later times. The title *Chitra-lapya-krit* suggests the prestige given to the wall painters; it is an index of the popularity of this style.

There is another fable of the epic period, which makes a woman the first painter of the world. For many days the princess Usha saw a beautiful youth in her dreams. She felt that he even walked with her in the garden frequently. She told her maid, Chitralekha, about this. Chitralekha, who was an amateur painter, painted portraits of all the Gods and heroes of the time. As soon as the princess Usha saw the likeness of Anirudha, the grandson of Krishna, she recognised the youth who had appeared to her in her dreams. And this led to Usha's marriage to Anirudha. Since then the word *Chitra* has meant something wonderful, suggesting the variegation of forms which produce wonder, mystery and delight.

Then there is a story which shows how paintings began with the Buddha: King Ajatasatru asked the Buddha for the Master's picture. Whereupon the Buddha allowed his shadow to fall on a piece of cloth. And this shape was filled in with colours.

There are hundreds of references in the classical Sanskrit literature of the centuries after Christ, to the practice of painting. Ostensibly, painting was used in the service of religion to illustrate the truths of the Hindu and Buddhist faiths. But it was also practised as Lalit Kala, Fine Art, by craftsmen as well as fashionable ladies and gentlemen. For instance, in Kalidasa's play, *Shakuntala*, the King Dushyanta paints a picture of his beloved, when he is separated from her. He even mistakes it for Shakuntala. The clown reminds him that it is 'only a picture'.

The splendours of this art were often shared by the people, who looked at the vast wall paintings, which were in almost every shrine.

4. Principles of Technique

As the sumptuous and rich halls of palaces and temples were being painted in the centuries before and after Christ, many 'how-to-do-it' books were written. Very few of these have survived. But, again, from the references given in these documents, we find that the discussion of both content and technique was subtle.

In the *Kama Sutra* of Vatasayana, which is a kind of encyclopedia of how to live the good life in this world, we see mentioned *Sadanga*, or six limbs of painting. The author, who perhaps lived in the 4th century A.D., says that he extracted these principles from more ancient works.

The six limbs have been rendered as follows:

1.	*Rupa Bheda:*	The knowledge of forms;
2.	*Pramanam:*	The correct perception of measure and proportion;
3.	*Bhava:*	The effect of feeling, emotion and moods of forms;
4.	*Lavanya Yojanam:*	The fusion of grace or charm;
5.	*Sadrisyam:*	Likeness;
6.	*Varnika Bhanga:*	Knowledge of colours and brushwork proper to its subject.

रूपभेद
प्रमाणम्
भाव
लावण्य योजनम्
सादृश्यम्
वर्णिका भंग

The critic Yashodhra adds: 'these arts avail to awaken passion in others and for pastime.'

It seems that the six canons, mentioned by the Chinese Critic, Hsieh Ho, in the 6th century A.D., may have been derived from the Indian *Sadanga*, because they are similar.

Another ancient book, based on traditions current before the Buddha (6th century B.C.), is *Chitralakshana*, or the theory of painting.

The essentials of a picture given in this compilation, relate mostly to hieratical and religious pictures.

And here it must be noted that there were, clearly, two kinds of pictures being painted from the earliest times to the 18th century in our country. Firstly, the pictures of Gods and Goddesses, heavenly bodies for worship. Secondly, paintings for personal use, such as portraits of heroes, relations or friends, and illustrations of texts in paint, on palm leaf and paper manuscripts, as well as wall paintings in houses.

There were certain rules laid down about how to paint the Gods. The household paintings were in the free style.

The Hindus believed that the Supreme God, who is One, created the world, when desire arose in His heart. And thus He had manifested Himself in the Manyness of the world. But this world is *Maya*, or illusion, and less real than the Supreme God. So there is a desire in the hearts of men and women to reach back to the One, to realise the Supreme God, to unite with Him, from the midst of Manyness.

As prayers were offered to pictures of gods, for self realisation, it had to be clearly indicated which god was being worshipped. For each god, being a symbol of one or other Guna or quality, of the creator, the Supreme God Brahma, the different qualities, or energies, were shown. For instance, Vishnu represented the goodness of Brahma. Shiva represented the power to create, preserve and destroy the world; Shakti, the consort of Shiva, represented the divine mother, or the feminine aspect of the creator, both in her benign mood as Matriarch, and in her destructive potential as Kali. The iconography for these religious pictures was fixed, though the artisans always put their individual feelings into their works and tried to bring their skill and experience of ever new ways of handling paint to their pictures, so that each work is different from another.

This could be done through *Yoga*, contemplation, or worship of the image of some quality of the Supreme God. Actually, of course, the painters seldom performed *Yoga*, but relied on

dream, or reverie, to realise what has been called *Dhayana-Mantra*, or the project image, more deeply than in free amateur painting.

The pure worshippers did not need pictures of images, because they could concentrate on the Supreme God as an idea or symbol. But to the lay, the humble, the ignorant, and the ordinary folk, the realisation of God, through worship of pictures, was easier, because paintings and images of clay or stone made the powers of the deity more concrete. In most people image comes before idea. As there was no buying and selling of paintings, the guilds of craftsmen, being maintained by the community for payment in grain, the Master artisans brought the highest skill, while the rough work was done by apprentices.

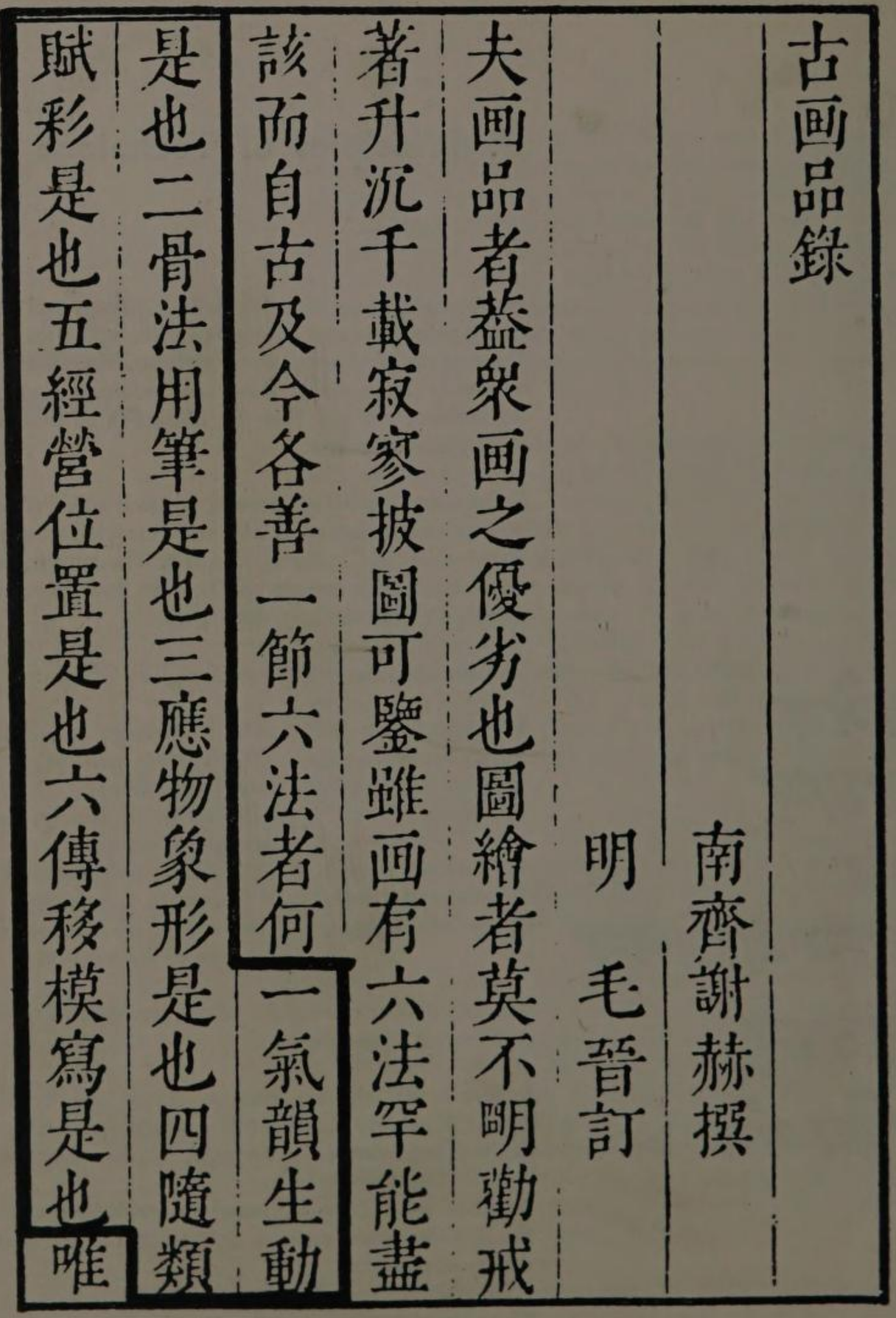
According to the rules in *Chitralakshana*, the gods must be represented as bigger in scale, the kings in lesser proportions, the ordinary people were to be shown lesser than the gods and the kings. For instance, it is stated that: 'the hair of the head of the gods, or of a lord of men, must be fine and curly, coloured a heavenly blue.' And women must be shown as 'heavy-breasted, swan-waisted and elephant-hipped' and always young.

To offset the glare of the sun, the Indians have always liked bright colours. Ochre-red, saffron-yellow, indigo-blue, lamp black, and white—there were the basic colours. Blues, greens and purples were formed from mixtures of the primary colours. And all these colours were given emotional and symbolical significance. Dark brown and red stimulate the *Sringara* (erotic) flavour; white stands for *hasya* (joviality); grey for *Karuna* (pathos); red for *Abhayanka* (terror); yellow for *adhbhutha* (marvellous).

The artisans were grouped together and lived on the outskirts of the town, relegated to low caste status in the Hindu order, though the Buddhist painters, who were anti-caste, were given equal status in the Sangha, or order. The teaching was passed on among these artisans, from father to son and son to son.

The skilled craftsmen moved from temple to temple, or shrine to shrine, wherever they were required.

And no one signed his name on a picture, until foreign traditions came into India.

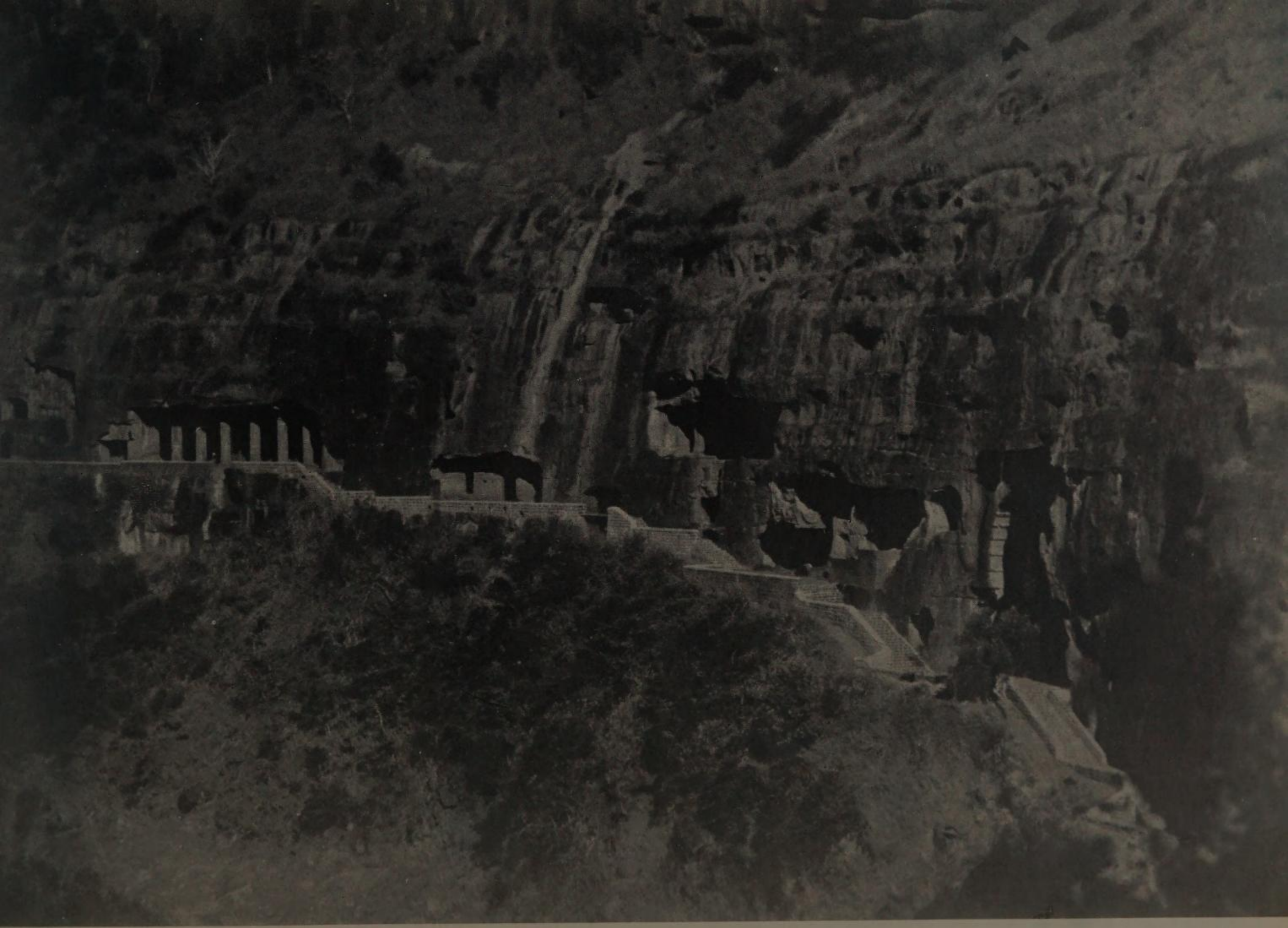

古畫品錄

南齊謝赫撰

明 毛晉訂

夫畫品者蓋衆畫之優劣也圖繪者莫不明勸戒著升沉千載寂寥披圖可鑒雖画有六法罕能盡該而自古及今各善一節六法者何一氣韻生動是也二骨法用筆是也三應物象形是也四隨類賦彩是也五經營位置是也六傳移模寫是也唯

Chinese six limbs of paintings like Indian Sadanga



Ajanta ravine

5. Ajanta

About thirty-five miles from Jalgaon, in the mountains of lower Khandesh, on the side of a lovely ravine, were discovered, in the last century, the twenty-nine rock-cut cave temples of Ajanta.

The giant rock, overlooking a small stream, seems to have been a secluded place from early times. The horseshoe shape of the ridge may have appealed to the Buddhist monks. The rain waters rush down in torrents and water-falls and rivulets during the monsoon season. And the strange calm of the valley below, and the wild glen, away from the routine world, was obviously chosen for its scenic beauty. Our ancestors seem to have loved nature more than we do and had a unique genius for finding the loveliest sites for their shrines. Apart from the carving of the caves into spacious prayer halls, with massive sculptures and intricate decorations, the walls of these temples were, at one time, covered entirely with paintings.

The first impression from what has survived of the crowded pictures is that of the sheer splendour of colour energies, in seemingly anyhow juxtapositions of free forms. But if one isolates a wall to look and *see*, among the endless rocks of this universe, one can withdraw to the small symbolical world of each painting. And, in each contemplation, may be revealed, in the hallowed dark, some of the most accomplished pictures of all time, suggesting moods, feelings and ideas of the subtlest qualities, which silently penetrate the awareness of a sensitive outsider and make for the interior realisation of the various traumas of birth, copulation and death in the life of man.

All the wall paintings of the first thousand years of Indian civilisation, which were lost to us through the depredations of time, seem to emerge here. And they establish the fact that Indians had been painting through the ages, heroic wall-paintings and not small pictures.

The dominant emphasis is on the curve, the graceful bend and on linear rhythm. The gliding movement up and down the surface, which was incipient since the fluid rounded structure of the Harappa torso, and in the singing line of clay and stone figures, seem to have come down to Ajanta. And here, at the beginning of the classical art in painting, the treatment of the rhythmic line makes for a plasticity, a lyrical movement and a dynamism, which releases new energies from the silent areas. And, although after the third, and fourth centuries of intense creativeness, decorative elements creep in, and the styles of the early formative periods are repeated in certain formulae, and of the first great epoch in the history of significant Indian painting was clearly witnessed at Ajanta.

In the earliest paintings (Caves 9, 10), there is much similarity with the relief carvings of the sculptures found in Barhut (Uttar Pradesh) and Sanchi (Madhya Pradesh) of 1st century A.D. Also, they resemble the sculptures at Amravati (Andhra Pradesh) of the same period.

The approximate dates of the caves are as follows :

1. Caves 9 & 10 (Circa B.C. 100 to A.D. 100),
2. Caves 16, 17 & also 4, 6, 11, 15 (Circa A.D. 470-500),
3. Pillars in Cave 10 (Circa A.D. 350 or later),
4. Caves 1, 2 (Circa A.D. 626-628).

Linear rhythms

Saddanta Jataka: Cave 10

The dexterously painted *Saddanta Jataka* in Cave No. 10 attributed variously to the late 2nd century B.C., or early 1st century A.D., relates the story of the Boddhisattva in his elephant incarnation.

The first part of the narrative shows the curvacious forms of energised elephants playing and gambolling in the foliage of the jungle. The rounded contours of the bodies of the hunters and the royal beasts are outlined in action from all sides, clearly distinct from each other. Only painters with intimate knowledge of animal and vegetable life, loving care for detail and with mastery over the crowded forms, could have caught each curve with the seemingly instinctive fluid line. The many branched trees and the foliage are vibrant because of the relative contrast of their sharp lines against the coherent animals.

The elephant playing, with the six tusks, introduces a drama within the lines and is exalted by the dots on his body as the most sacred animal. The python-like trees on the left and the flow of lines in the other part of the scene, heighten the energies of the picture.

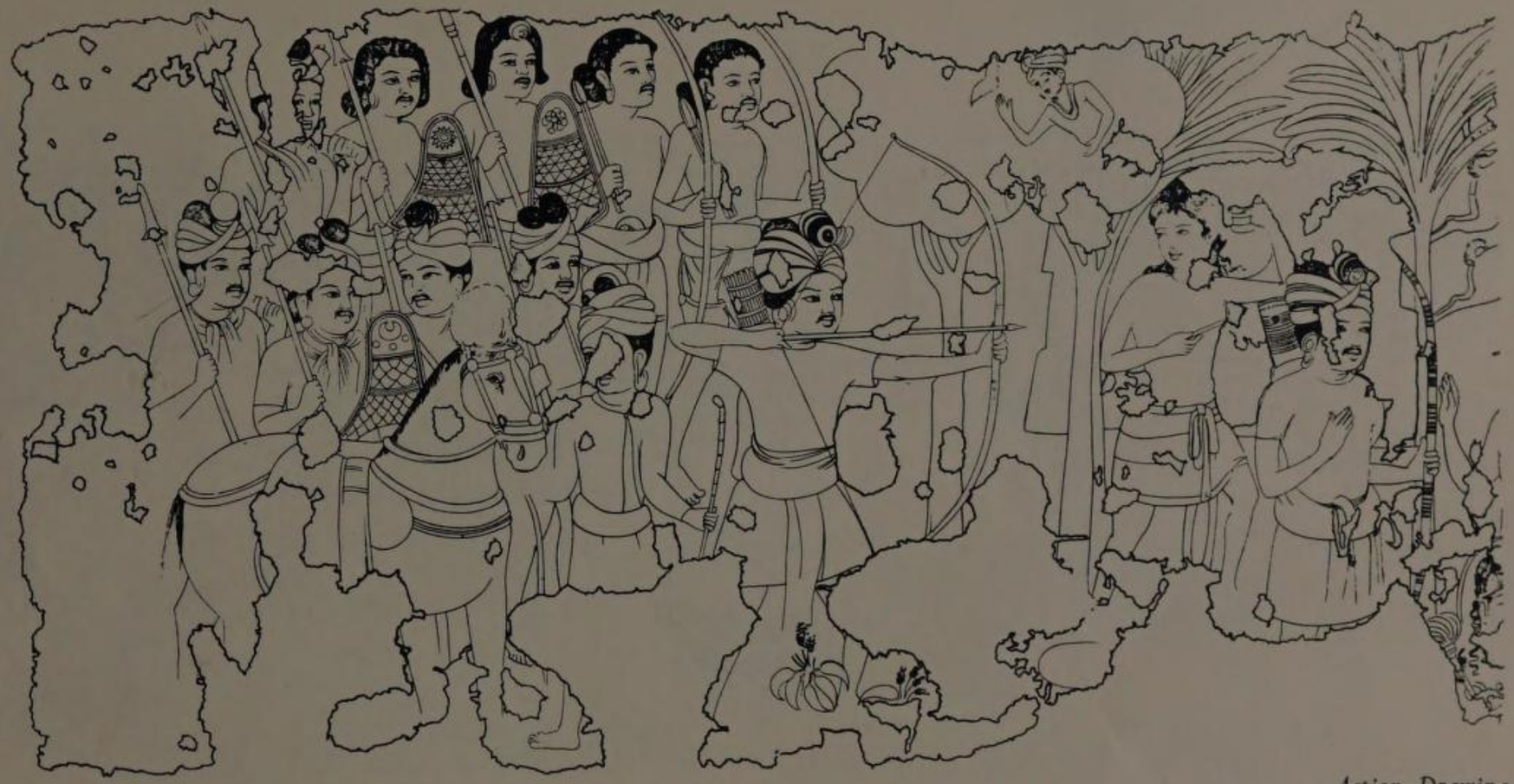
The six-tusked king Elephant is supposed to be pacifying his jealous wife. But one is not conscious of the theme here

The fainting of the Queen at the sight of the tusks

as much as of the pulsating life of the forest, with the free interplay of wild elephants and their hunters.

This second part of the story deals with a palace scene. The jealous she-elephant has been incarnated as a queen. In her rage she gets her husband, the king, to order the hunter to kill the six-tusked elephant and bring his ivory tusks. The hunter returns with the tusks soon, because the six-tusked elephant had willingly offered himself to be killed. At the sight of the prize, the queen is horror-struck and faints, because she remembers that she had once been the wife of the holy elephant with the six tusks. The drama of the shock is important to the theme. The multitude helps to intensify her sorrow.

The treatment of the pictorial situation in the other parts of this long panel, in the continuous, almost unending, narrative is highly complex. The spatial colour relations of the areas have been thought out with uncanny foresight and nothing has been left to chance. The clarity with which the overlapping forms are drawn is obviously the result of a technique perfected over long years. The gifted painter seems to have a bold, fervid and intensely inventive imagination. There is revealed great sophistication in the delineation of moods.



Action Drawing

Shyama Jataka : Cave 10

Another remnant of a wall painting in Cave 10 is important to notice in this first phase of Ajanta. This deals with the *Shyama Jataka*. The panel is ascribed to the late 1st century A.D. and is even more mature in some ways than the *Saddanta Jataka*. The drawing is firm. The moods of the character are suggested with greater charity. The grouping of men and women, the foliage, and the orderly array is almost like a drama in the ivory carver's technique of the reliefs on the Sanchi Stupa and in the panels of Amravati.

The early Ajanta style of the century before, and after Christ, shows an 'archaic' art, as in ancient Egypt and Greece and early Christian art. The painter knows how to apply his basic colours and how to mix them for undertones. The genius for the expression of the moods and sentiments of people is evident in the deeply felt figures, almost raised from the background in relief, as in sculpture. It is obvious that though these are the earliest and most mature works of Indian art known to us they were certainly not the earliest painted in India, because such great skill in applying colours and in draftsmanship on walls could not have been achieved without generations of past effort. In short, caves No. 9 and 10 may indicate the continuity of the living tradition of the lost paintings of India of the centuries before Christ.

Of course, in the Barhut and Sanchi Buddhist Stupas, already the relief carvers had attempted such intricate compositions in stone.

The Buddha had taught the kinship of all living things, birds, animals and human beings. In fact, it had been believed that the 'enlightened one' had himself gone through many bird, animal and human, incarnations to become the Buddha. And the legends of these incarnations had been woven into the stories called the *Jatakas*.

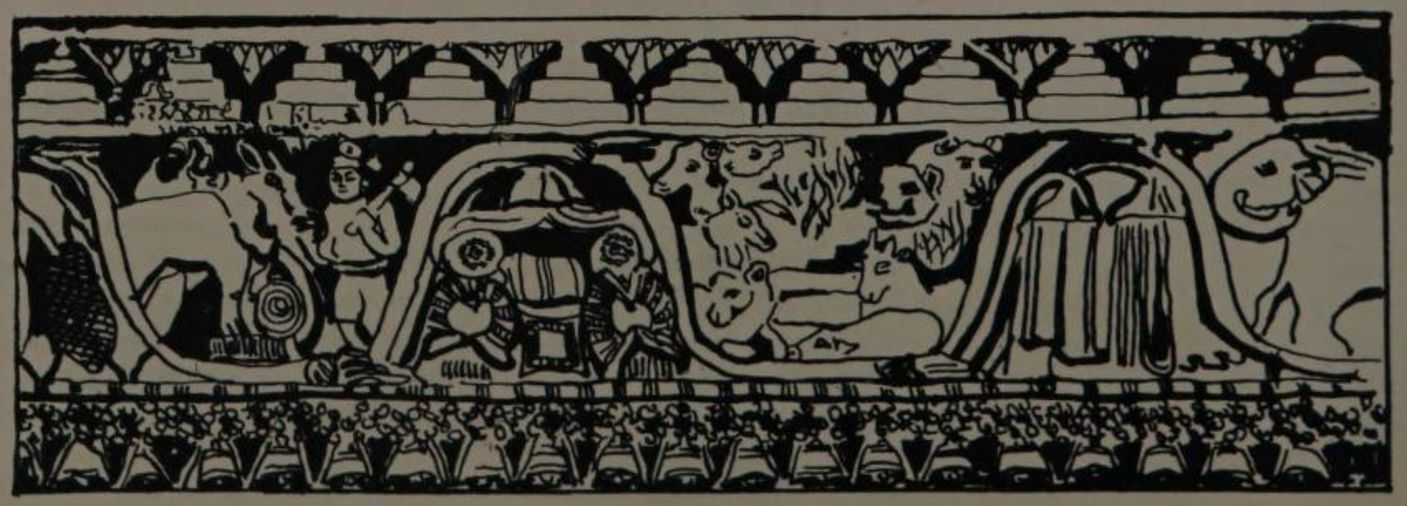
And, here on the walls, the characters of various *Jataka* tales appear, in all the fullness of their being—living, breathing and moving, almost as though they were sentient.

Sanchi Torso

Winged lion

The breadth of vision, the skill in handling animated crowds, and the complete mastery in interpreting all kinds of human, animal and floral forms, make these paintings typical of the attitude towards space of the Indians. Space is Time and Time is Space. Both are eternal. The painters only take a portion of wall and allow forms to arise, indicating the eternal flow of life in other spaces and times. Thus the narrative of the earthly life runs through the wall paintings, like an endless inner rhythm. The pictures, which may seem disconnected, are really part of preconceived design, itself part of a greater harmony in the disharmony of the various universes.

The painters were concerned with the expression of the soul drama and solved the problem of optical perspective differently from the works of Renaissance Europe. In the continuous narrative, they presented various parts of their story in one and the same composition, on the same flat level. There is no depth in the two dimensional perspective. Depth is in the heavy colours.



Barhut: Floral binding line

The imagination is allowed free play as against the perceiving eye. This technique followed from the belief that the mind transforms nature. So, though they seem natural, they have been felt and thought out and done from memory and imagination. It is as though the artist became god and tried to put the sap of life into lines and colours, so that the best panels are 'almost breathing.' In order to achieve this heightened creativeness, the painters employ the free sweeps of colour to get contours of fullness, as their brother sculptors had employed rounded forms, without the help of geometrical measurements. One flowing musical line is set off against another to show that everything is in movement, amidst the jostling of crowded forms, like ripe fruits on the tree of life.

Cylindrical Buddha figure in Ovoid

The Bodhisattava : Cave 10

The Bodhisattava on a pillar of Cave 10 already shows developments beyond the horizontal panels of the first and second centuries A.D., to vertical compositions of a classical character. The curves are more emphasised. The cylindrical figure begins to be evolved, which was later to mature into the Buddha figure facing the Mother and Child in the ante-chamber of Cave 17.

The golden brown youthful figure of the Buddha emerges from the pillar from a green oval-shaped aureole, above which is a chatri with flying figures on either side, while two worshippers look up from near the pedestal. The clear line of the earliest wall paintings continues. The gracious bend of the figure while blessing the monks is a masterly handling of the Bodhisattava's tender mood.

Buddha and the One-eyed Monk: Cave 17

The curved lines which enclose the Buddha figure in the painting entitled, *Buddha and the One-eyed Monk* in Cave 17 may have been painted according to the canon: 'the Buddha's image round, round, seven times round.' The brushwork, which describes the folds of the wrapping on the smooth brown body, mounts upwards and falls downwards, in rhythmic waves. The hands, uplifted in the preaching posture, are sensitive and delicate like lady's fingers. The aureole around the Buddha's head, in green, tinted by white lines, and surrounded by double lines, dominates the whole scene like the sun. The memory of the master is adumbrated, five hundred years after his passing away, a symbol in which the imagination has objectified the original presence of the prophet.

The warm, but detached, figure is contrasted to the awkward shape of the one-eyed monk in white robe, tinged with mosslike green.

The monk, preparing a garland from the falling flowers below, is witnessing, with intense eyes and uplifted head, some important drama between the two holy men.

Colour contrasts

Does this scene, at once human and raised to the dimensions of a fable, enacted in the garden, indicate some problem of the one-eyed monk which he had put before the Master. Perhaps the Buddha is explaining that pain is the natural accompaniment of existence. And that it is necessary to give up the most cherished illusions and cultivate the courage to endure constant suffering.

The intimate personal human feeling is obvious in the sentimental garland maker. The linear composition, growing from the natural life below the feet of the Buddha, upwards into the abstracted universal discourse, is one level of the picture. The spiritual debate raised by the suggestion of the whites of the illuminated intelligence of the Buddha's gentle, half shut eyes, in contrast with the one-eyed monk, is on another level. Only when the drama of the confrontation is glimpsed in this way, when the presumption about the enlightened one's clear distinctions between agitation and change, between the surface calm of happiness and the suffering below, are suggested, can the painter show how the various selves in the supplicant monk must die, before detachment can be possible, from which the general nature of suffering may be understood.

The colour contrasts in this archaic painting are contrived so as to lead from the charm of the foliage to the excitement of the warm presences of the Buddha and the cold presence of the monk, with the will to realise the universal phenomena of the need of awareness, not to one disciple but to all mankind. Pervasive truth is here indicated by a mastery of illusory forms by some master who had not ceased to believe in the objectivity of realism, while he used the reflections of reality to elaborate the words of the unspoken dialogue.

We have to jump three centuries to come to the classical phase of the third to fifth centuries, when we see a new sense of form emerging far beyond the archaic.

Sutsama Jataka

Sutsama Jataka: Cave

Fragment from Sutsama Jataka shows ability to portray drama through subtle movements of the hand as well as eye play.

Complex scene with invisible unity of composition

Descent of the Buddha from the Tushita Heaven: Cave 16

The finest examples of this phase are the two panels, *Descent of the Buddha from the Tushita Heaven*.

Beyond the firmness of line of the earlier centuries, there is a certain intricacy of composition. The linear rhythm which binds the figures is sustained inspite of the greater complexity. The faces are more intense. The clothes and the hair styles are more elegant. There is almost individualised expression. The skill for handling of form in the forest scene of elephants in Cave 10 has been heightened, so that here is clarity and calm achieved through long practice.

Use of ochre and black in coherent composition against pale green, emphasis on individual figures

The Naga king before the Bodhi tree: Cave 10

This painting of the early first century B.C., achieves the synthesis between the Deccani emotional colours and the restrained skill of the north-west. The height of the Andhra pictorial genius is seen here. The narrative is built up with care, with firm outline of male and female types. There are vitalist poses and a deliberate idealisation, or exaltation, of the earlier earthy creatures, as in the Sanchi relief carvings.

Buddha preaching in the Bamboo Grove : Cave 17

The crowded composition is intended to show the world-wide popularity of the teaching of the Enlightened One. The foreign capped Sythians mingle with Greek faces and the Indians. The procession of elephants and horses converge onto the scene where the Buddha is preaching the sermon. The variegated colours are used to symbolise the rich world of spirituality. The drawing of the figures is firm and clear. The eyes are all agog. The dramatic truth holds the attention of the crowd almost as the words of Jesus were shown to do in the Last Supper by Leonardo, a thousand years later. The mastery of workmanship is amazing in the visualisation of the myth of conversion of many hitherto unconscious people to the truth proclaimed by the Buddha.

Buddha preaching in the bamboo grove

Detail of Dying Princess ▶

The Dying Princess: Cave 16

The sweep of the brush, which describes the contours of the woman in the centre of this panel, is characteristic of the mature Ajanta expressionism. By tilting the head slightly and suggesting the limpness of the figure in the falling left hand, the painter has evoked the fundamental stance of near death. The tender attitude of the three maids, one supporting the woman from behind with her outstretched left hand; the other watching anxiously to read the face of the patient; the third bent forward with head distraught, crystalise the moment. The supporting cast of the two male attendants, rushing in from outside, and the two anxious females on the balcony next door, indicate the tension in the atmosphere. The peacock in flight and the bent leaves of the banana tree in soft green shades, are suggestive of sadness.

The balance, or harmony, of various linear rhythms, on which the Indians insisted, are here attained through the highlighting of the reclining princess against the softer colours of the background as well as the intense bent head figures of the retinue. The twist of the peacock's long neck on top is used as a kind of broken binding line, nearly connecting up with the banana leaves on the right. The contrast of black hair against the ochre red bodies accentuates the sombreness of the situation. And behind the sorrow, growing denser with brown black surface effects, the attendants, with somnabulist faces, glow like half burnt coals of smouldering fire. The flow of colour is arrested by the rectangular structure of the top of the doorway, jutting into the panel. The enforced hard lines of this space introduce a contrast with the flow of brown colour in the soft sad twilight of the period.

The rigid white and grey pillars of the balcony and the hard chair are contrasted to the sombre ochre red bodies with the intense jet black hair. The drama of death spreads from within the panel outwards, making the particular statement into a general symbolic truth. Karuna, compassion, or understanding, implicit in the Buddha's teaching, is emergent here from below the surface relations of the paint. Realism, as the realisation of superficies, goes beyond its western definition, into near total expression, because the artist has come up from the depths where nature is transformed. The first inspiration to imitate outer reality has obviously been overcome by abstraction. The temptation to record the impression has been conquered by the courage to recreate the melancholy mood. The felt experience has been elaborated through objective skill into the awareness of other men's experience. The dim awareness of the shadow of death illuminates, without hysterical flourish, but gently, the atmosphere of suffering beyond the pain.

This is perhaps one of the most important paintings in Ajanta, of a period when the early naive emotions had begun to be absorbed into contours with sharply accentuated lines, filled in with deepening colours. There is no use made here of light and shade, but the surface is monochromatic and the intense figures are almost in relief. The whole composition suggests inner stirrings.

We are told that this is a dying Princess. Her husband, Nanda, the half brother of the Buddha, has been taken away from his beloved wife by the master and ordained to be a monk. The wife is dying of the shock of the going away of the husband, with an emotion, which seems like a subtle portrayal of a faint, or of the slow lapsing of all hope, or of the fading into death.

This is one of the great moments of Ajanta art, in so far as it adumbrates sadness for all time, not as an illusion, but as the outer form of the reality of death itself.

The Dying Princess ▶

Bhikshu : Cave 6

This kneeling figure involved in prayer is outlined in the perfected curves of the Gupta period. The three lotuses in the lefthand, the incensor in the right hand, with the head tilted backwards and the half closed eyes, are in accord with the Mahayana ideal of mystical Buddhism. The rhythmic line of the drawing emphasises the harmonies which the painters now included from the Hindu attitude towards pictures as a way towards God. The colour scheme is mellow (though very different from what it was twenty years ago and in the present reproduction) and indicates masterly ability to evolve the mood of contemplation from inside a decorative pattern.

Bhikshu

The Mother and Child before the Buddha: Cave 17

The large panel of about the fifth century A.D. shows how the sweep of the painter's brush realises the vision of the Buddha's grace in a manner unsurpassed anywhere before. The composition is bolder and on a grand scale, as in the *Simhala Avadana* panel, which covers the whole wall with powerful effect. The colours glow. This painting, like others in the same cave, are the highest pinnacles of the Ajanta development before the style begins to become a manner.

The gracious bent head figure radiates compassion for worshippers

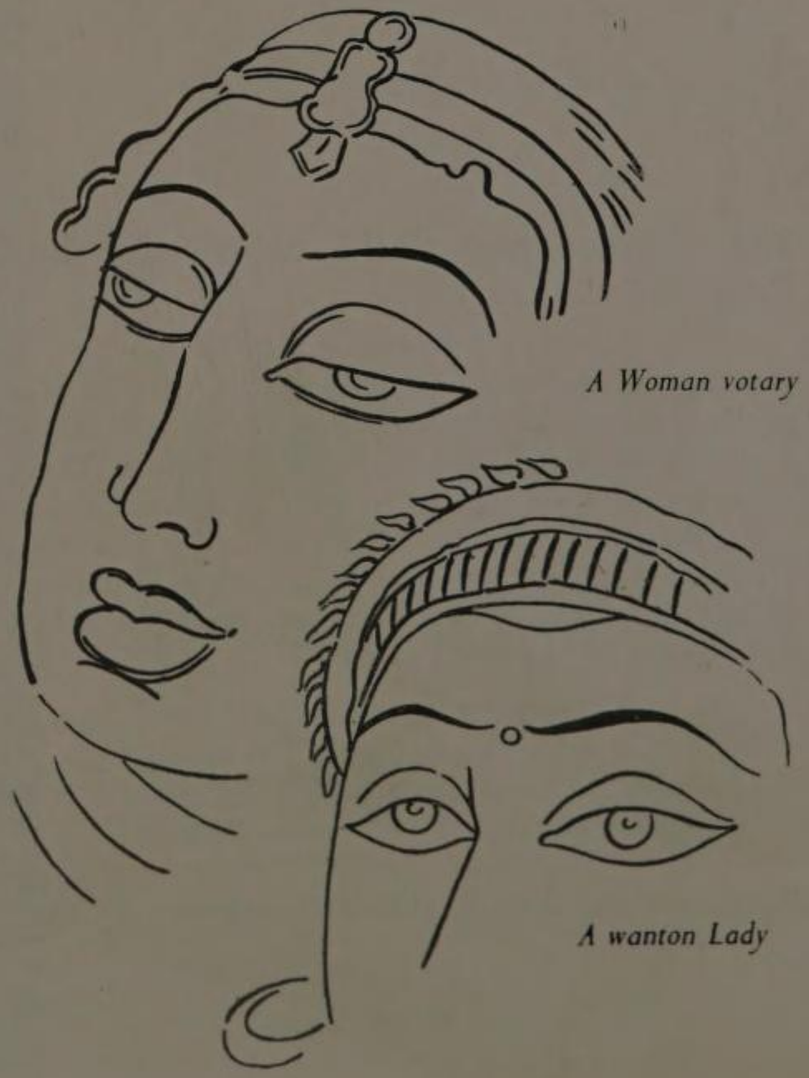
Simahala Avadana : Cave 17

Caves 16, 17 (and perhaps 4, 6, 7, 11, 15,) have been ascribed to the time of the Vakataka dynasty of the 3rd century A.D. There is an inscription of the Vakataka king, Harisena, in Cave No. 16. And the style of paintings in all these is similar. As one of the Vakatakas married a princess of the Imperial Gupta dynasty, there was obviously some exchange between north and south. Chandragupta II, the legendary Vikramaditya (378-414 A.D.), had expelled the invaders and brought comparative peace and plenty to the country. The creative arts flourished, because more surplus money was available.

The stability of the rule at the top, and the gold brought by the trade, is reflected in the calm assurance of the technique of this new period. There is no sign of neurosis. The divided mind of man seems to undersand itself. The painter has a comprehensive vision, like that of a mighty bird who circles over the heart's mountains, taking in everything in the timeless universe.

Cave 12 reflects the attempts to fuse the foreign influences brought from the north-west and west, but these efforts are still unsuccessful.

Simahala Avadana : Lady with the casket



A Woman votary

A wanton Lady

Palace Scene : Cave 17

Desire is made more redolent in the perfumes of refinement which pervade the atmosphere of the pillared terraces surrounded by foliage in the *Palace scene* of Cave 17. The figures, all involved in the delicious pleasure of a happy life, seem to speak in the metaphors of Ujjain, almost as though the painter remembered Kalidasa's haunting slokas. The stance of the prince recalls the words put into the mouth of the hero in the *Ornament of Love:*

> Great lady, renounce your pride.
> My beloved queen
> Are my words to no purpose?
> Should they be pronounced
> to be true by you
> There can be no rancour against your slave.
> The rapid entwining of arms, the nibbling
> Of teeth, the kneading of opulent breasts,
> If all this displeases you, pierce me then
> With these shafts, the arrows
> of your sidelong glances.

In fact, the whole universe seems to have been explored, with a deep curiosity, and rendered in rich sensuous colours. Alas, this hedonist world is inevitably doomed to decay, as the Buddha had said. Life is evanscent. And yet its pulls and tensions urge the problem of its passing away.

Palace scene tending to decoration

Flying Gandharvas : Cave 17

This composition showing flying figures reveals the zenith of Ajanta art in the Vakataka-Gupta period of the late fifth century A.D. The rhythmic flow of the heavenly bodies is attained by fine brush work and expressionism, though we can see the beginning of decorative mannerism, which is more completely obvious in the Bodhisatva Padmapani of the sixth century in cave No. 1.

From this fragment of the reign of Harisena (whose inscriptions have survived and have been the landmark for dating), the upper wall is redolent of the freedom, expressiveness and maturity of the brushwork of Ajanta craftsman. The colour scheme is splendid and balanced in the harmonies which the Gupta age witnessed at the height of a long period of practice of the art of painting. The painting echoes the lyrical world of Kalidasa's poetry of the same period.

Flying spirits in the clouds as in the Kalidasa's Meghdoot

Apsara: Cave 17

This near flying figure, bejewelled and decorated with a tiara on her head, the scarf flying off from her neck, and delicate hands in gestures emphasised by the long finger nails, shows the preference for prettiness that came in, at the end of the Gupta period. The princess, fantasised from the metaphorical world of the Kalidasa, reflects the richness of the courts, the lavish patronage of the princes of the Buddhist shrines and the replacement of the earlier austerity of the caves No. 9 and 10, with concessions to pleasures introduced by the Hinduised Mahayana Buddhism. The rhythmic line is still dominant. The warm, glowing colours remain. And there is no loss of skill in the delineation of forms.

Apsara with tiara

King and Queen: Cave 1

This is another evocation of the world of Kalidasa, painted perhaps in the late fifth century in the Vakataka-Gupta style. The indolent ease of the love scene carries no reminder of the pain of the world. The richness of the period, which has been called a golden age, was certainly not a spiritual richness as much as in material wealth. The abbots of the Buddhist monastery had already begun to honour the love life of donors more than their piety. The composition of the interior shows the capacity of the painter to handle several levels of life on the two dimensional wall painting.

Awareness of pain in pleasure

The rasa of fury of 'Demons'

Demons : Cave 16

At the height of the search for lyricism and harmony, the Ajanta Masters did not neglect evil. And the distortion of facial effects of the Demons in Cave 16, shows that they are capable of sensing all the moods of men. The ferocity of these rustic types, with the cows around them, shows that there is a certain class attitude which considers the envy and greed of the peasants to be demonaic. The monks seem to be neutral as they were patronised by the monarchs.

Pink Elephant : Cave 1

The pink elephant, with the lotus in his mouth, though too perfect and stylised, retains the verve of one of those wild heroes of the forest in the *Saddanta Jataka* of Cave I. The genius for the portrayal of movement in Ajanta depended on the linear rhythm. The artist of the late 6th century has, however, had to add floral exhuberance to decorate the symbol of the Bodhisattva. Fortunately his brushwork carried him beyond the mannerism into the texture of many lines, specially near the two legs. And the prancing figure, emerging from the pool of lotuses, achieves a tonal expression and a movement which makes this particular presence into a living symbol with some 'quick' behind him.

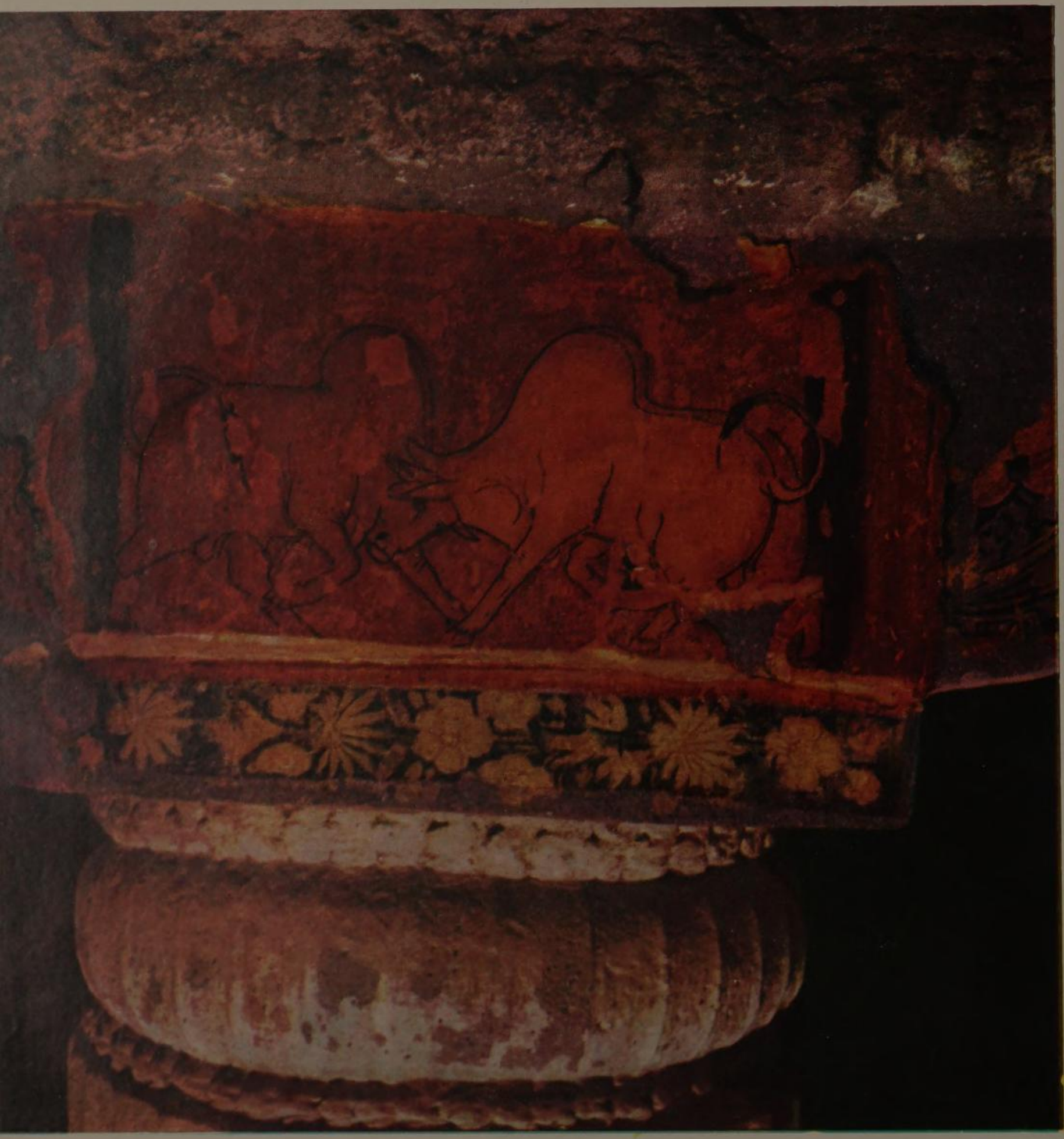
Elephant with the lotus in his mouth

Golden Geese : Cave 1

The golden geese, which were once symbolic of the Buddha as his previous incarnations, have here become a dignified procession of decorative asides, intermixed with the stylised foliage, so as to look like flowers themselves.

The artist has become clearer, the passion behind the symbol is gone. The pictorial representation has no depth, to suggest any more than sentimental flourishes of the fancy. Decorative motifs have become popular.

Decorative geese



Fighting Bulls : Cave 1

The imitation of the Bullfight would have gained if the artist had shown the other movements of the fight, as he has shown the obscuring of one head behind the other. The painter, however, belongs to a period when the principle of decorative isolation had entered Ajanta. The bull on the right hand retains enough vitality in its thrust forward, inspite of the double line of the torso. But the bull on the left hand seems to pose for his picture, as if he was an elegant princely wrestler, who liked being portrayed. This and other pictures in Cave I are the tail end of Ajanta technique, showing the survival of the wish to create miracles when the inspiration had been lost in ritual.

Rhythmic vitality is now deliberately strained after, not felt

Dark Princess : Cave 1

The heavy-breated, luscious young girl, with the pouting mouth and mystic gaze and the half open eyes, is adorned with so much jewellery that she clearly represents an era of feudal prosperity.

The Wanton Lady in Cave 17 of the *Visvantara Jataka* has been transformed into a baroque figure. There is a mannerism here, in what was the once alive art of Caves 9, 10, 16 and 17. The decorative elements of Caves 1 and 2 are pronounced, with an emphasis on prettiness. There is still vivacity and a certain poise. There is even depth. But the elaborate toilet, with the careful array of the tiara on the dark hair, the ringlets and the kiss curls, all denote an elegance where the fundamental question of the vanity of life is not asked. Ajanta has reached a development, where the monks seem to lure worshippers through lovely girls. The romantic figure is exalted. The brooding qualities of the earlier women of the preceeding centuries still linger, but the sophistication of the dress, the jewellery and the ornaments can only evoke physical excitations in the onlooker, not the sinuosities of the intellect, in search of causalties.

Symbol of sensuous desire

Presumably Persian Embassy in the court of Pulakesin II. Exotic costume

Persian Embassy: Cave 1

One of the last panels which shows resilience in composition is the so called *Persian Embassy*. This has been dated to about 630 A.D., because there is some evidence of an embassy from Persia arriving in the court of Pulakesin II. Clearly the Persian capped figures owe their presence to contact between the Chalukya power and the nearby empires. Also, the composition of this picture shows that the Ajanta art did not finish in the sixth century, but was still being practised in the middle of the seventh century. The visit of the Chinese pilgrim Huan Tsang at about this time to these cave temples confirms this view.

The panel suggests the entry of the glory of the court as such into the iconography of the Buddhists. The grouping is well done. There is full awareness of the secular life. And there is no reason to doubt that even in the decline, the Ajanta artists were capable of accomplished work of a high order.

Bodhisattva Padmapani: Cave 1

The *Bodhitattva Padmapani* in Cave 1 has become famous, because of the Tourist poster on the railway stations where this has been frequently reproduced.

The deliberate accentuation of elegance of the figure, with the elaborate crown of diamonds and sapphires, the consciously organised poetic stance, with the bursting lotus in the unfolding right hand, and the slightly tilted effeminate pose of the body, not to speak of the bowshaped eyebrows and the elongated fish eyes, all are the attributes of a fashionable, young Bodhisattva. The painter has obviously tried to imitate the new handsome princes of the Deccan. The hero is too mannered to indicate the moment of abandonment of the good life by the prince to escape from personal suffering and experiment in universal sorrow.

What is, therefore, offered is not the revealed truth about inevitabilities, but a *Nagarika* of the post-Gupta luxury cities of the provincial south, copying the richness of the northern courts. Cave No. 1 is indeed replete with the art of glory and not of suffering. The individual has become more important than the deepest feelings, which were the haunting voices of the Bodhisattvas, with their message of calm, in the earliest periods.

The happiness of hedonism seems enough. The early Ajanta masters had painted the illusions of life to develop the powers of the spirit by the confrontation with truth, in the earthly phase of life. This Bodhisattva shows the lapse of felt experience behind the painting.

Elegant potential Buddha, perhaps a donor prince

Princess: Birth of the Buddha: Cave 1

The baroque manner is the hallmark of the later 6th, 7th, 8th century paintings in Caves 1 and 2. The background is compartmentalised with pillared verandhas. The jewellery and the hair style get detailed treatment. The girl is always sexy and her charm is a greater consideration than the theme. The grouping of figures is mechanical. The dreamy almond eyes of the woman are exaggerated. The moustachios of the men make them into heroes. The decline has set in.

Artificial mannerism of palace female

6. Later Wall Paintings

Map of Greater India and Central Asia

During the early centuries just before and after Christ, when Buddhism was a spreading tree, there already were local styles, specially in the meeting points of Persian, Greek and Chinese cultures in lower Central Asia, now comprising Afghanistan and northern Pakistan, at one time known as Gandhara, where many monasteries had sprung up.

The impulse of Ajanta was felt here. This was enriched by Graeco-Roman-Parthian-Bactrian-Kushan-Iranian complexes. And thus the Ajanta brushwork, colours and lines, travelled to the wall paintings of Tun Huang in Western China, as well as in Bamiyan in Central Asia, and in Tsparang in Western Tibet.

These paintings were later to create the style of the banner, or Tanka roll, which could be carried from monastery to monastery, as in Tibet. The pigments of these works are more thickly laid on, as cloth is more resistant than wall surface. Also, all kinds of magical beliefs transformed the Buddhist Jataka stories of Ajanta.

But it was nearer home, in the south Indian Hindu and Jain temples, where the tradition continued actively till the mediaeval period.

The important surviving fragments are in Badami, Sittanavasal, Tirumalaipuram, Ellora, Anegudi, Lepakshi, Tiruparutikunram, Bagh and Sigriya.

The tender innocence of Parvati engraved almost in relief

Badami

There is only one surviving fragment of a mural in a cave temple in Badami, (6th century A.D.) now discoloured by the smoke of hearthfires. The theme of this is the bethrothal of Shiva and Parvati. The delicate, soft musical line, in which the figures are drawn, suggests masterly brushwork, deriving clearly from Ajanta. But while the later Ajanta style tended to prettiness, the curves here are firmer. The tenderness of the innocent Parvati comes through the surviving faded texture like a relief from the rock, carved in colour, as it were, possessed of a virgin's fresh grace. The shyness of her lowered eyelids, her soft chin, and arched brows, betray her lively anxiety as well as anticipated joy at meeting her beloved. Like the flutter of her veil, the innocence seems to be quivering. Shiva looks benignly on, while he extends his arm, drawing Parvati towards himself. The painting gives forth the perfume of an intimate world, in which one face leans on the other. The painting is bound together by an intense emotion, realised through the inner relationship of the figures. Obviously, this painting is the result of the skill handed down through the long practice of generations of craftsmen. The space is as limitless as in Ajanta. The treatment is from within. The expressionism is in terms of the eternal drama of longing.

Sittanavasal

There survive certain Apsaras, or heavenly dancers, in Sittanavasal whose slender forms have been drawn with a sureness of touch and the quick incipient love of the female body. The dancers are caught in swaying movements, narrow-waisted, heavy-hipped and loaded with ornaments, with the grace of lithe panthers, who open the heart of the onlooker to a pagan world where the seductive charm of woman was not taboo, as to the later terrified generations. In another painting, the God Shiva appears, perhaps for the first time in his role as Nataraj, Lord of Dancers, with something of the energy with which he was to be portrayed in the sculpture panels of Ellora and Elephanta, radiating his energies into the whole world with unhampered movement.

In the Jain caves at Sittanavasal, we see that the Pallava craftsmen used greens and browns and purples, with a genuine ability and a lyrical flow of line. Lotuses spring up from imaginary ponds amid variegated greenery, under a bluish sheen. The circular movement of the brush, visible in the background of Ajanta, is carried on, deliciously, across unthought of things, to surfaces from which poems leap into one's stilled half-open mouth.

A few figures show the Jain angularity and the sharp, clear outline, which were to reappear in the Indonesian puppets of a later period and in the Kalpasutra palm leaf and paper manuscripts.

Lotuses, fishes, birds and human beings, showing unity of life

Tirumalaipuram

The fragments of wall paintings in Tirumalaipuram, found by Prof. Dubreuil, show the transition from the decorative later Ajanta to the southern intensity, under the Pandya dynasty of the 8th century A.D.

The free flow of line is maintained, as in the continuous linear rhythm of Ajanta. The curves are continued in the drawing of birds. The outline seems to have been drawn with red and then with black. The rich, hot vermillions, yellows, reds, blacks, blue and greens are used to deepen the effects.

One of the important surviving panels, here, from the Lakshmana mandap, shows bird-headed devatas, among the 8th century figures, as in Ellora, with fish eyes and sharp noses amidst clouds. They are streaked in ochres and reds, with flame-like outlines.

These paintings are full of the selfsame spirit as at Ajanta, but with a warm sensuous inner glow. There is a masterly handling of line, which carried forward the earlier Pallava tradition, enriched by the Shaivaite passion, that had begun to possess the Deccan peninsula. There is here the wildest sensuality and utmost expressive power.

Big fish eyes and sharp noses echo ferocity

Ellora

The cave temples in Ellora cover nearly three hundred years of development, from 7th to 11th centuries A.D. They were done for men of different faiths, Buddhist, Hindu and Jain. The greatest of these temples, however, is the Hindu Kailasa temple, hewn out of solid rock in the 8th century A.D. This giant carving was scooped out of rock in all its fundamental massiveness. It was patronised by the Rashtrakuta dynasty of north-west Deccan, after they had defeated the Chalukyas of Pattadakal in 760 A.D.

Fragments of wall paintings have survived in a few of the shrines.

The most important remnants were in the Kailasa temple.

The surviving wall paintings were of different periods.

The earliest layer shows the minor gods and godlings paying homage to Shiva in the land of the gods. Although the drawing here is in the Ajanta curvacious line, Hindu gods are the new heroes.

In the next layer, showing Vishnu riding on Garuda, the drawing begins to be angular, as in the pointed nose of *Garuda, Lakshmi and the Gandharvas*. The eyes also begin to extend sideways, as later in the Jain miniature style of the 'further eye'. These features appear in *Shiva riding on Bull*.

In the later paintings of the 12th century, in the western porch of Kailasa, there were some battle scenes, which showed that the angularity of line had almost completely replaced the curvacious line.

The colours were still the old, old ones: Gerua red, yellow, black and white.

One important change in the technique of paintings, however, must be noted: the gradual disappearance of the Ajanta curves and the emergence of *angularities* in hips, knees, hands and facial features. The early decorative detail of jewellery gives place to a stark simplicity. This may have been due to the puritan Jain feelings. Also to the mood of defiance of the period against the Muhammadan incursions may have unconsciously crept in, a kind of surrealism of the tormented peoples, who were being threatened and oppressed in every generation, particularly near the strategic area of Deogiri fort, the base of contending armies in the Deccan.

The sharper noses and extended eye begin to show militancy and defiance

The reign of luxury in the court life of Vijayanagar Empire

Anegudi

The great Vijayanagar empire, built by Hindu kings in the early thirteenth century, was destroyed by a combination of the Sultanates of Ahmednagar, Bijapur, Bidar and Golconda, at the battle of Talikota in 1565 A.D. The famous capital of the flourishing dynasty was wiped out, and only a few remnants survive to tell us of the magnificent Vijayanagar culture.

The murals showing *Uchayappa Mata* in *Anegundi* are in the traditional Indian style. The old mural technique of painting on lime plaster is followed. The figures, painted in reds, yellows and lapis lazuli blues, have not become faded. But, in the rich exuberance of finely rounded human figures, emerging from the background of flowers, elephants and clouds, there is evident, a fine energy and flow reminiscent of the Chola artists of the previous centuries.

The revival of faith in the Vijayanagar Empire

Lepakshi

The *Lepakshi* wall paintings are on the ceiling of the temple, dedicated to the Virabhadra incarnation of Shiva. These paintings take the form of profiles of the great God, with the torso showing high shoulders. The figures are worked out almost like stone carvings in relief, which indicates that the painters were probably also the sculptors of the temples. Although the icons are not rendered in the free flowing line of Ajanta, the convention of the curvacious line is used to define the contours. They arrest the attention of the pilgrim's gaze, as they emerge boldly out of pure space, with weighted limbs, in an excess of vigour which clearly derives from folk impulses.

The Vijayanagar artisans sought to revive the old dynamic vision of rhythmic fluent forms. In later periods, they tended to become feebly decorative, with exaggerated emphasis on jewellery, high crowns and festoons. But they always retained a love for bright colour contrasts, set off to effect the black outlines of figures, against patches of white paint, that compels the sensibility with the contrast of startling, disturbed, almost hectic and passionate Andhra colours.

Tanjore

The passionate fervour of the Tamil temperament absorbed the Ajanta curvacious line into mobile figures, tense, taut and vibrant. The continuity of the tradition of dance and music made itself felt in the plastic arts. There is a tendency to exuberance in the sculptures, but in the paintings, the structure is always organic, though bursting out of the walls. The colours are flamboyant, but used to heighten the intense moments.

The folk colours and forms in classical pose

Tiruparutikunram

On the outskirts of Conjeevaram there was an important centre of Jain architecture, in the village now called *Tiruparutikunram*. There are two temples here, one dedicated to Chandraprabha and the other to Vardhamana. They have the main features of the highly coloured, even loud, South Indian style. In the verandahs and near the mandapa are wall paintings, showing scenes from Jain mythology and the life of Tirthankaras. The strips of narrative are continuous. For instance, in the Life of Rishabhadeva, there are the following scenes:

(a) The Diksha ceremony.

(b) Kachchha, Mahakachaha and others trying to imitage Rishabhadeva in this diksha;

(c) Unable to bear the cold, they clothe themselves, and, unable to bear hunger, they feed themselves with fruits and roots.

The firmly drawn figures show little movement. But the vivid colours are laid on in lyrical sweeps. The forms are not aggressive, as in Jain books. The story is recited in the modern comic strip manner. The panels are inwardly painted, showing understanding of basic colours as well as the secondary mixtures and some sense of projecting relief as in sculpture.

Jain puritanism reminiscent of austerity in South Indian shrines

Rhythm of dance and music of Bhil figures in Bagh Caves

Bagh

In the paintings of the Bagh caves of the 6th and 7th centuries, situated about 150 miles to the north of Ajanta, across the Narbada River, there is a parallelism with the last phase of painting in Ajanta. Unfortunately, most of the Bagh paintings have been destroyed by time and neglect. But, among the excavations, there was a hall of over 90 feet square, covered with paintings on the walls, the roofs and the columns.

Rich, dark bodies, in gay circling movements, as in the crowded long dance panel, exhude warmth from the midst of green and white pigments. The faces are happier than in Ajanta, perhaps because they are of tribal origin. And, though fewer in number, the Bagh murals were startling, because they were in a smaller space area.

The scenes in Bagh were not all religious. There were pictures, which seemed to evoke Kalidasa's poems even more than in Cave 17 in Ajanta.

The scene, showing musicians and dancers referred to above, is full of a strange rhythmic vitality. The whole composition is upheld by the gravitation of all the figures towards the pivot of the dancer. And there are the girls of Kalidasa's poems, with 'winejar hips', on fragments of walls, imbued with the passionate feeling of human love preferred by the bard of nearby Ujjain.

The animated group of dark brown women, all engaged in playing on accompanying musical instruments to the vigorous male dancer, is one of the most dynamic panels on the walls of India. Vibrant with joy, its sensuous appeal is redolent of the spirit of the period, when the ordinary folk loved the pleasures of life, without sacrificing themselves in the fires of asceticism, or being overshadowed by the later 'fate', which condemned everyone only to survive for a while in the coils of the illusory world.

Although these paintings derived their inspiration from the last phase in Ajanta, many of them have a vivid charm, which is peculiarly their own, as though inspired by the passion that came from the abundant black soil of Malwa, from the intense Bhil life. And they left important traditions in the various nearby areas, because these documents connect up the Post-Gupta 6th—7th century paintings with the mediaeval styles that arose, in different circumstances, later on in Malwa, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Madanpur

Although we have a number of fragments of wall paintings from South India, there are only a very few survivals of this technique in northern and central India.

Therefore, great value attaches to the traces of narrative painting found on the ceiling of the Vishnu temple at Madanpur, near Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh.

This temple was built in the time of Raja Madan Verma (1130-1165 A.D.). The paintings were added later.

Dr. Stella Kramrisch has suggested resemblances between these and the Jain western Indian paintings of the 12th to the 14th centuries A.D.

Clearly, the angular flying figures, with pointed noses, and the extended 'further eye', dressed in patterned tight-fitting costumes, have affiliations with the Jain characters in the mediaeval palm-leaf *Kalpasutras*, as also with eastern Indian Pala palm leaf Manuscript paintings. The conventional lotus, the peacocks, and other decorations, are also similar to those in mediaeval paintings. Only the Madanpur figures are more static, though thickly crowded in the Hindu manner. They move around the main static design of the ceiling almost like the Apsaras of Ajanta.

Jain strains in Hindu wall paintings

Sigriya

The surviving paintings under the shelter on the giant rock of Sigriya are all semi-naked Apsaras, or may be the various queens of the parricide King Kashyapa. Delicate, gentle-faced, cylindrical women, with heavy breasts and elaborate coiffeurs, they carry lotuses in their hands as they move in the heavens above the clouds.

The brushwork employs the curvacious, sweeping rhythmic contours of the early 5th-6th centuries Ajanta, when too much luxury had not yet robbed the painting of its vigour. The walls seem to have been plastered with mud, as in India. Then the outlines of the rounded lines was indented. Later the broad washes of colour were used. The pigments were predominantly yellowish earth red, heightened by blues and greens. The bold arcs of the gracious hand of each of these women seems to suggest the effort to treat the wall surface, so as to raise the figures almost into sculptural reliefs. And yet the fluid waves of the background colours give the illusion of only extended lines, projecting the luscious forms into our awareness, moving across the free sky, projecting their ecstatic future into our faces.

Among the descriptions of the enchanting beauties of the Sigriya rock are verses written by Singhalese poets, who probably saw them long ago :

Are they frightened
The ladies with the golden skins
That they stand so silent ?
This long-eyed girl
Says nothing
But a flower flaunts in her hand.

"Her lover is dead
Then why does she hold a tender sprout ?"
"You thought I had enjoyed her
But there are none who gain her love."

The golden-coloured ones
Sign to me with their flowers.

Since she held flowers in her hand,
My passion was aroused,
Her body catching my eyes
As she stood in silence.

Seeing you posturing on the mountain
My heart delighted when I saw
That flowers were in your hand.

Ajanta colours travelled to Lanka

7. Lama Taranath's History

From the 7th century onwards till the 14th century, the history of Indian Painting goes underground.

This does not mean that people did not paint anymore. Always, the folk in the villages painted earthen pots and pans, drew Rangoli drawings, and decorated their houses on each festive occasion. But the paintings in the big temples and palaces were not attempted to any extent, perhaps because of lack of patronage. Or they have been lost through the destruction brought by feudal wars, seeping water, nesting pigeons and time.

Therefore, there is much confusion about the various links in the chain. And we are forced to go back for evidence to a Tibetan Lama, named Taranath. He wrote some pages on Indian Painting, in his History of Buddhism in India, compiled in 1608 A.D.

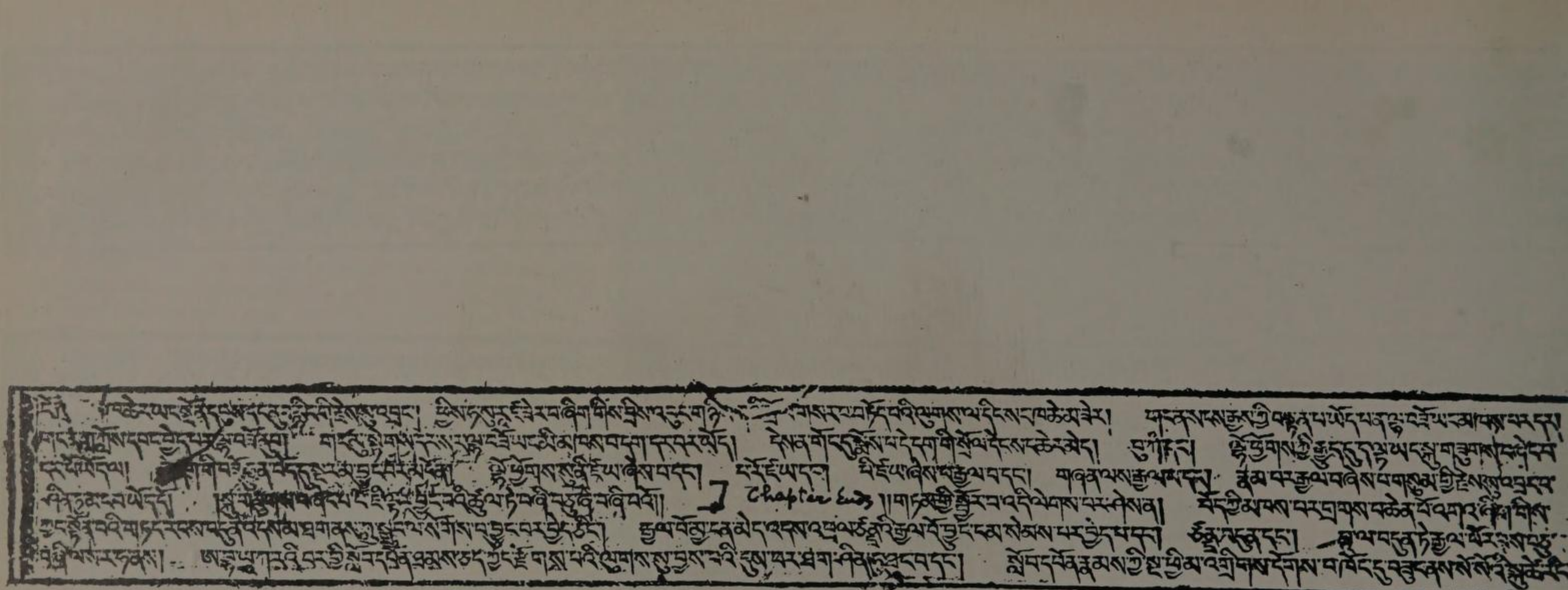
Lama Taranath says that there were three styles of art prevalent in India :

1. That practised by the Devas;
2. That practised by the Yakshas;
3. That practised by the Nagas.

The Deva style flourished in Magadha, (modern Bihar), during the centuries after the birth of the Buddha, from the 6th to 3rd century B.C. The masters of this style were supposed to have miraculous powers. Their paintings were such 'as to deceive, by their likeness, the actual things depicted.'

The Yaksha style prevailed from the time of King Ashoka, from the 3rd century B.C. downwards. Lama Taranath talks of these Yakshas as 'demi-gods', who produced 'astonishing work'.

The Naga style is said to have been popular in the time of the Buddhist philosopher, Nagarjuna, who preached in the Deccan in the 2nd-3rd centuries A.D.



After the 3rd century, A.D. says Taranath, 'it seemed as if the knowledge of art had vanished among men.'

There was, however, a revival afterwards. And three schools began to flourish :

1. The school of the middle country ;
2. The school of the western country ;
3. The school of the eastern country.

The school of the middle country seems to have prevailed in the area, which is now called eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. This was founded by a great painter and sculptor, Bimbasara, who was born in Magadha, in the reign of king Buddhapaksha, about 5th or 6th century A.D. Lama Taranath says that there were many painters of this school, and their works were like the early creation of the Devas of olden times.

The western school seems to have been located in Rajasthan. And it owed its inspiration to the artisan, Sringadhara, who was born in Marwar, in the reign of king Sila (Siladitya Guhila) of Udaipur, who lived in the 7th century A.D. The tradition of the school was similar to that of the Yakshas.

The eastern school flourished in Varendra (Bengal), under the patronage of the kings, Dharmapala and Devpal, in the 9th century A.D. Dhiman and his son, Bitpal, were the important artists of this school. Apart from painting, they also knew sculpture and metal work. The style practised in the eastern countries seems to be similar to that of the Nagas.

Lama Taranath refers to other schools in Kashmir, Nepal, Burma and Southern India, flourishing between the 6th and the 10th centuries, A.D. But, he says, they were inspired by the three main schools mentioned above.

This almost mythical history has some reference to the actual facts about the various schools which flourished in India.

The curvacious classical line in palm leaf painting in Eastern India

8. Mediaeval Buddhist Paintings

Quite a few Buddhist palm-leaf manuscripts have survived as links in the chain from Ajanta and Ellora, from the 12th century. These show the continuity of Indian tradition of painting, though the locale and the materials have transformed the old techniques. They obviously belong to the school of the 'eastern country' mentioned by Lama Taranath. In the area of Bihar and Bengal, had flourished many monastries of the new Buddhist faith, specially at Nalanda and Vikramshila. The stimulus for the new doctrine had come from the Emperor Harsha of Kanauj in the 6th—7th century and later under the Pala kings of eastern India. The main idea was that enlightenment, or Buddhahood, is incipient in all beings. But that we have to wash ourselves clean to get rid of wordly delusions. This could be done through meditation on images and diagrams, by which the personality is dissolved into emptiness *The Prajna*, or wisdom, by which *Nirvana* is achieved, is visualised as a goddess named *Prajna Paramita*.

In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, there is a plam-leaf manuscript of the *Ashtas-hasrika Prajna-Paramita* with eighteen miniatures in the text dealing with this cult of early mediaeval Buddhism. The covers are intact. The small paintings show scenes from the life of the Buddha, and other Buddhist divinities.

The general style of the pictures is almost of reduced wall paintings, because the Ajanta fresco tradition had become widespread in the country, specially in the Buddhist monastries with emphasis on linear rhythm and rounded lines.

There was a manuscript, with Jataka scenes, in the collection of Mr. Ajit Ghosh of about 1100 A.D. Then there is a palm-leaf manuscript of the *Mahamayuri*, of the 12th century, in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benares.

Eastern Buddhist paintings show the traditional linear rhythm in continuity

All these manuscripts were derived from Bengal.

Of similar palm-leaf books, written and illustrated in Nepal, where the movement spread, there are two:

The first is a manuscript of the *Prajna Paramita* formerly in the collection of Mr. Vrendenberg, dated 1090 A.D. The second manuscript, of the same text, is in the collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, dated 1070-71 A.D.

In the very small space allowed by the palm-leaf, the Buddhist miniatures measured $2\frac{3}{4}$''x2'', because the remaining space was occupied by the text. In fact, the figures seem as if they have emerged from the text. That is to say, they are calligraphic. As the palm-leaf is soft, the curvacious line of Ajanta could be preserved, though it is sometimes broken into sharp edges. The colours are vivid: ochre, red, yellow, black and faint blue. It seems that the outlines of forms were drawn first. Colours were filled in afterwards. The faces have a downcast look. There are decorations of geometric designs, and animals like stags, at the end of each chapter. The clothes and furniture give an idea of how people lived in the early mediaeval period.

Altogether, these Buddhist paintings show that the traditional curvacious line and glowing colours had survived but have been reinforced by folk vigour. The emotions are more highly charged; colours glow; a new marginal touch has entered; the arrangement of the crowd is still skilful, but often naive and primitivist.

These are very vital and rare documents of a period, of which we have scanty evidence, and they prove that painting remained a habitual creative practice with the Indian people. The tradition was handed down from father to son and son to son among the guilds of craftsmen. But the painters seem to have assimilated new materials and new techniques with changing times, inventing new resilient forms, whenever conditions were favourable for the appearance of fresh shoots on the tree of Indian civilisation. The lure of the female body remains constant: sublimated into goddess, woman is drawn with passionate yearnings of the artist's fantasy. Echoes of the unconscious seem to emerge above the surface and the more physical and sensual Tantra Yoga had begun to give freshness and vitality through the recognition of the female as mother, beloved and regenerater.

Jaunpur 1465 Kalpa-Sutra: The ferocious further eye as part of style

9. Jain Miniatures

After the death of Harsha of Kanauj in 648 A.D. the patronage given to Buddhist art declined. Anyhow, after the 7th century there were few additions to wall paintings at Ajanta, Bagh, Sittanvasal.

Nothing much is known about the pictorial art of India from that time till the 12th – 13th centuries, until the Jain paintings of the early mediaeval period and later began to be found in various parts of the country. There are little palm-leaf and, later, paper manuscripts, about the lives of Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, and of his other incarnations. Of these, the *Kalpa-Sutra* of Bhadrabahu is the most popular. As they were written and adorned for pious, rich Jain merchants, they are mostly decorative, though they received strong incursions of brushwork from Iran and Central Asia. They are primitivist. The men and women have sharp angular faces. The figures are stereotyped, shown squat, or in the tri-bhanga pose. The naive pictures have, however, a strange vitality. Apart from the traditional reds, yellows and blacks, foreign colours like lapis lazuli blue and foreign made paper contribute, later, fresh elements, which made for a new synthesis. The decorations consist of lotuses, sunflowers, animals, birds, fairies, around the typified Jain saints.

The heavenly bodies are patternised with bright crimson backgrounds and yellow costumes, being touched off, progressively, with Persian blues and greens. The black for hair is used for contrast, as also white for spatial effects. The use of gold in the paintings on paper makes for over-sumptuousness and decorativeness in the paper phase. Landscape and sky relieve the archaic type figures of the medial manuscripts.

The themes are taken from the Svetambra Jain myths. As they were mostly painted in Gujarat, or in the areas of Rajputana near Gujarat, they have been grouped under 'Gujarati painting' by the late N. C. Mehta. And as they were written in the colloquial 'Apabrhamsa' (corrupt) language and not in Sanskrit, the name 'Apabrhamsa' has been given to them by Rai Kishandas. Later, they have been called 'Western India Miniature Paintings' by Dr. Moti Chandra.

The oldest palm-leaf *Kalpa-Sutra* manuscript in the Jain Library in Patan, has pictures dated to A.D. 1237. Throughout

the 13th century, inspite of disturbed conditions at the top, single figures of Jain Rishis continued to be painted.

After the Patan manuscript, the *Kalpa-Sutra* of 1237 A.D., there is one dated manuscript of 1427 A.D. in the India Office Library, London.

There is a non-religious mediaeval Gujarati manuscript on cloth in a long roll of *Vasanta Vilasa* of 1451 A.D. This is 436 inches long and 9.2 inches broad, including left hand margin one inch wide, and right hand margin $\frac{3}{4}''$ wide. It was written (or painted) by Acharya Ratnagar, for the instruction of Shah Shri Chandrapal, son of Shri Shah Depal. The theme, *Vasanta Vilasa*, is the advent of spring. Nature in the month of Phalgun is the real hero, though the passion of love between the husband and the wife, 'which has increased threefold' is the *leit motif*. 'The spring has come. Nature is fragrant. The sky is cloudless.' So the pictures in this book are not so much illustrations as a kind of pictorial interpretation of the theme of Love in springtime.

One panel shows a group scene, in which the hero is delicately holding the hand of the beloved. Two pairs of humming bees are flying in the upper background. There is a thin bent tree behind the heroine, separating her from the two swan-waisted, heavy-hipped maids with crossed legs, feeding a parrot. But, as the bees are supposed to be 'awakened by the smoke of the flaming hearts of separated lovers', the bees are obviously symbolic here. The composition evokes the mood of the approach of the lover towards the demure woman. The sensitive handling of the pleasure ground lends a strange charm to the women adorned for love. The wiry, tense line of the drawing, with the abandon of the flying draperies, conduces to the tension of the approach. The conventional curves of the tree and the foliage indicate lyrical desire.

Another panel displays two women conversing, while the hero, obviously after the nuptials, relaxes on a couch with a lotus in his hand. The two scenes are separated from each other by a clear line of demarcation. The lasciviousness of the conversation-piece on the left is contrasted with the mood of the man of discrimination who spends his time in the pleasures of song and poetry, filled with nostalgia for the love life.

A third panel shows the heroine in a lush garden, full of trees, birds and flowers, in clear lines, bright colours, against a lively background.

Love poetry softens the Jain faces and asserts unity of nature

There is no doubt that in pictures like these the stereotypes of the Jain *Kalpa-Sutras* become enlivened. There is an attempt to delineate the love of nature, which is not so lush near Ahmedabad, as though by way of compensation. The pleasures of life enjoyed by the Sultans of Mandu may have been heard of by the subjects of Padshah Ahmad Shah Qutli-ud-din, the ruler of Gujarat.

Coomaraswamy has rightly praised the pure draughtsmanship. But as Mr. N. C. Mehta remarks, these miniatures, are 'restricted in their vocabulary of expression.' Only in the *Vasanta Vilasa* paintings, the Jain *Kalpa-Sutra* is emerging from its conventions into a certain freshness, freedom, and vigour. These paintings are not as heart warming as those in the nearby *Malwa Raginis*. But the Gujarati people are expanding, from the austere life to 'small gardens, flower swings, comfortable beds, gaudy hangings' and other pleasures of life.

Like the Buddhist palm-leaf manuscripts, the Jain miniatures appear side by side with the written legends in square panels, left empty by the scribe.

The same themes are dealt with again and again. Mahavira as a child is lying by his mother. Mahavira is seated under a tree against a rocky landscape, while the god Indra takes his royal robes and gives him monastic clothes and so on.

Later the Vaishnava *Balagopala Stuti*, full of the moods of the love play of Krishna and Radha began to figure in such paintings.

The lapis lazuli blue of Persia, as well as certain Iranian forms, crept into these paintings, through the traffic between the middle east and the west coast of India from the 9th century onwards, and specially after the Arab invasion. The geometric symbols also owe something to the Arabs.

The drawing is stylised, with its sharp noses and ferocious fish eyes. And one eye is extended in the peculiar way which has come to be called the 'further eye', jutting out of the profile.

Moti Chandra has traced affiliations for the sharp features and the 'further eye' in the Jain paintings to the paintings in later Ellora frescoes and those in Sittanavasal. Kramrisch has also shown affinities with the paintings in the Vishnu temple at Madanpur in Lalitpur district, Uttar Pradesh.

These paintings of the 12th century share their angularity in drawing, pointed nose and 'further eye' with the Jains as also the treatment. Professor Nihar Ranjan Ray has shown parallelisms with Pagan and Eastern Indian workmanship of the same period. The linear conception of wiry, sharp, pointed line, had, indeed, spread everywhere in India.

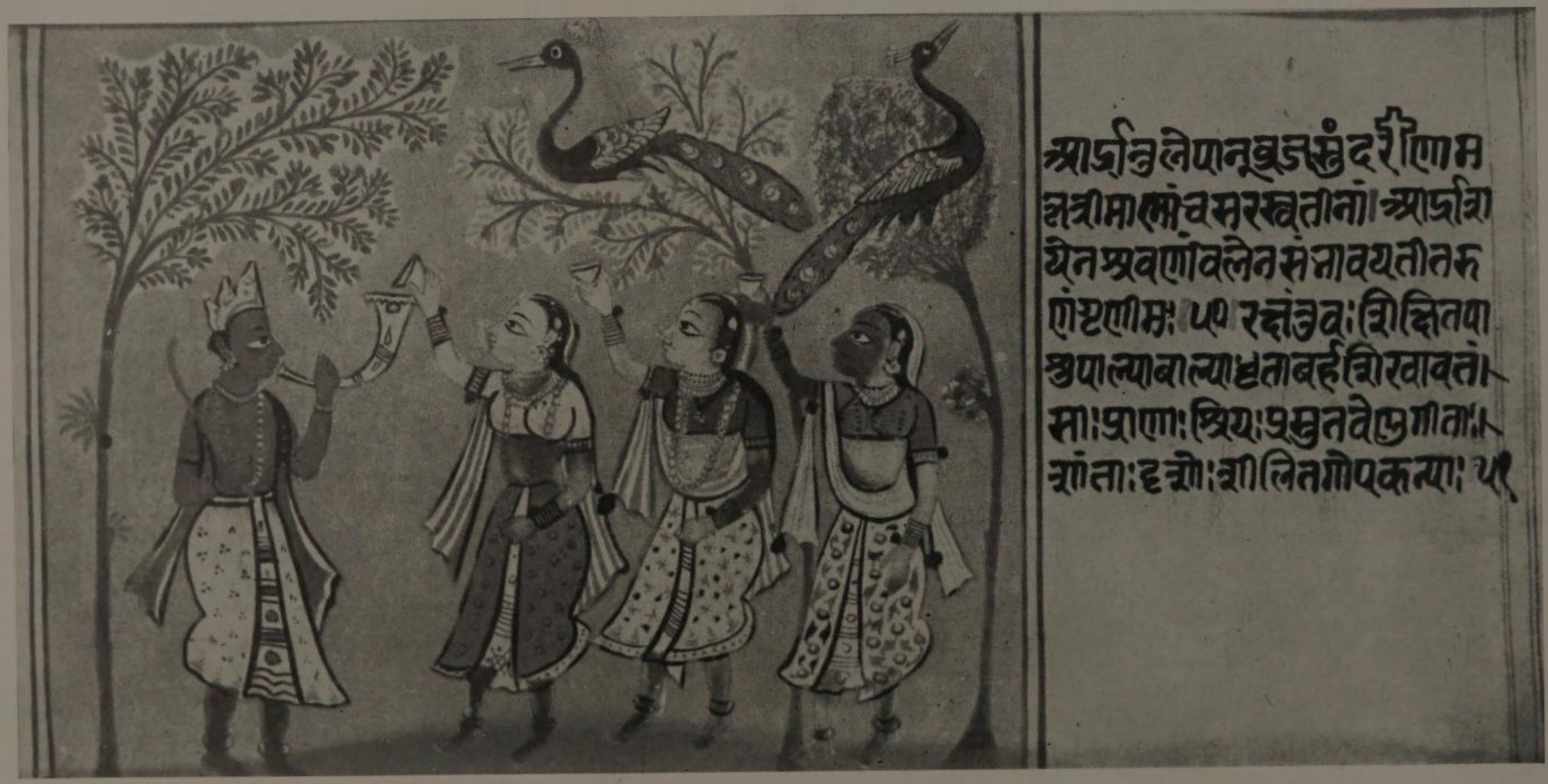


Illustration from a manuscript of Balagopala Stuti : Western Indian style. Early 17th century A.D

10. Malwa Painting Under Sultanate and After

After the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni in the 10th century, there had been frequent incursions from the north-west. In 1206 A.D. a Muslim Sultanate established itself in Delhi under Qutb-ud-din Aibak, a General of Muhammad Ghori, who defeated Prithvi Raj Chauhan, with his twin capitals in Qila-i-Rai Pithora in Mehrauli, near Delhi and Ajmer.

For the next three centuries, there issued forth feudal noblemen, who sought to carve out independent or semi-independent kingdoms for themselves wherever they could get a foothold in India.

The history of feudalism is punctuated, everywhere, by long periods of barbarism and short periods of civilisation.

Culture in such periods seems to survive mostly underground, where the small people, compelled by the miseries of life, try to find some answers to their discontents. Or the Raja or Sultan himself wishes to show off his power and glory to himself and the people and encourages artisans to do something to ensure his immortality.

As the nights belong to the knives, and the days to the sharp, shining swords, there is no security of life, the ordinary people try to save themselves, physically and mentally, by retreating into the shell of the ritual of the accepted faiths. Here and there, an individual of burning conscience breaks through and seeks perfection, inspite of the rigours of oppression on all sides, by opting out of society, as an ascetic, or by turning to poetry or craftsmanship. As the works of these men are not valued much, they enjoy the freedom to wander and live on charity, or through whatever little patronage they can get.

These are centuries when the art of painting seems to disappear. But we find that the folk inherited the love of colour, generation after generation. And little holy books of religion were carried in 'armpit secrecy' by the travellers, pilgrims and merchants wherever they went. The walls of temples all over the country absorbed the techniques of the classical styles of the Buddhist caves, in broken forms or near folk variants.

From the 13th to the 15th centuries, we find several infiltrations into Malwa of the Sultanate of Delhi. Ala-ud-din overran the whole region during his marches in Middle India. And several vassals of the Delhi kings, as well as rebellious generals, held sway for short or long periods.

In 1405 A.D. a Muslim dynasty of the Khalji Governor of Mandu, Hoshang (1405-32 A.D.), declared itself independent of Delhi. These Sultans of Mandu waged incessant war and brought nearly the whole of Malwa under their rule for over a century and a half.

Under these Khalji Sultans, there was much building activity and patronage of the arts. Their predecessors in Delhi had already built up a tradition of mosque and mausoleum architecture. The Khaljis continued to emulate the example of the north in middle India. In this way, the Seljuk Turk, Persian and local Hindu forms began to be connected, at first in crude mixtures, but later in more studied fusions. The domes and mehrabs of Islamic architecture from Arabia were synthesised with Hindu carved stones. The abstract geometry of Byzantium travelled, along with the lyrical Arabic calligraphy and met the deeper colours of the Indian sensibility.

Hoshang must have remembered the buildings in Mehrauli. So he ordered a wonderful mausoleum for himself, with a dome made of marble from Makrana, in an elegant style evolved by himself.

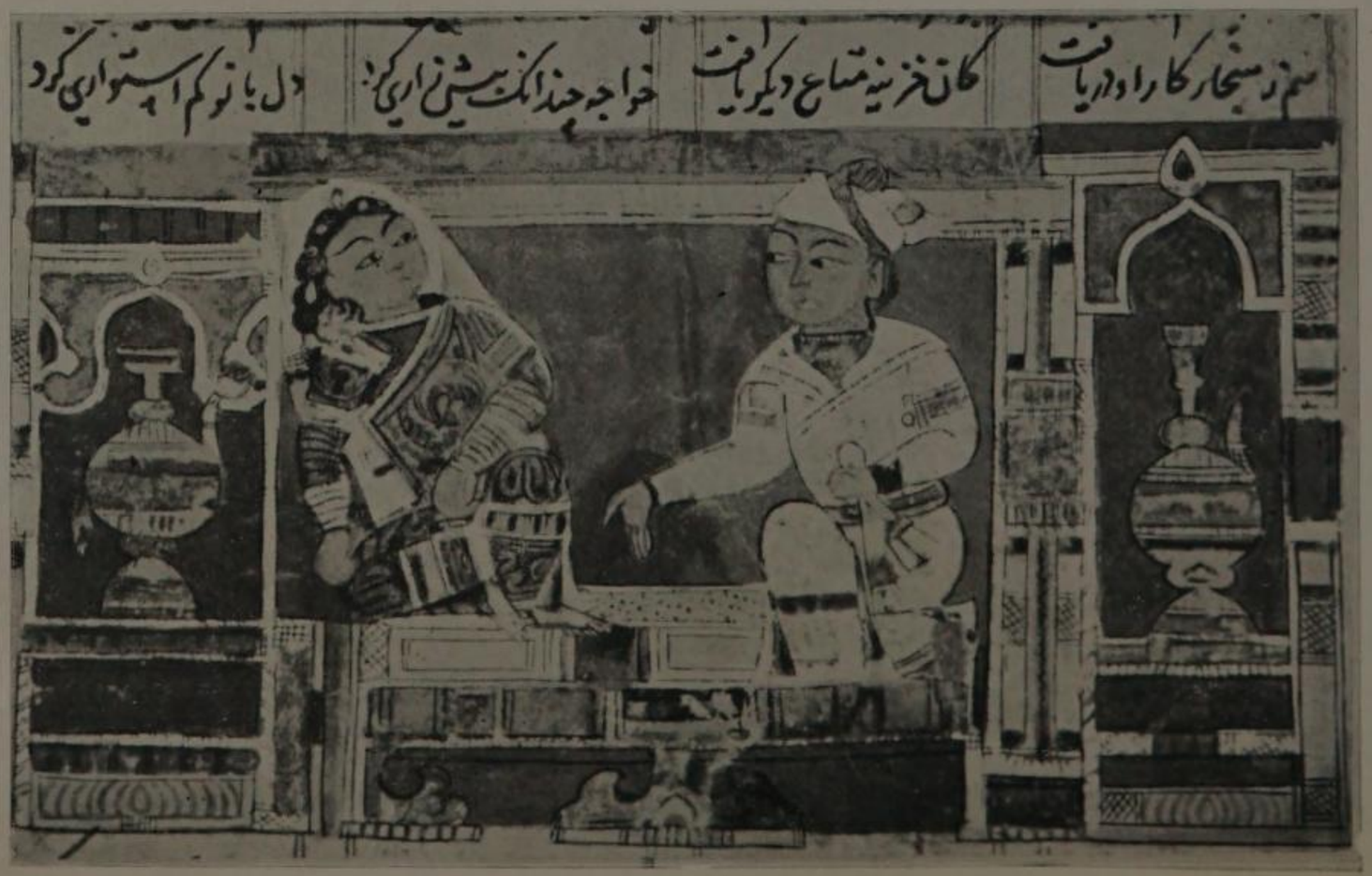
His second successor on the throne of Mandu, Mahmud I (1436-1469 A.D.), wrote poetry in the Hindi language, sent and received embassies from Bokhara and was just to both Muslims and Hindus.

And his son, Ghayas-ud-din Khalji (1469-1501 A.D.), was a colourful prince, an aesthete and a lover of women.

This seeming decadence was really a loosening up of the rigid codified world of the Mullahs and the Brahmins, an invitation to the people to taste the flavours of life, to release them from repressed orthodoxy.

Apart from the addition of many comforts to the wonderful palaces built in Mandu, there also seems to have been much coming and going of emissaries and men of culture from the Mandu court to the other kingdoms. The spring festival became an annual event under Ghayas-ud-din.

Majnu weeping on Leila's grave. Sultanate Painting



There is an illustrated Jain *Kalpa-Sutra* in Mandu of 1439 A.D. The paintings in this manuscript have the usual flat red backgrounds, and three fourths face with the 'further eye', but different in so far as the old ferocity of the Jains is disappearing, with more curvacious lines in the definition of the figures. The elements are not so compressed in space. And there is a 'wriggling skyline'.

The treatment of the elephant, of the jutting *palla* of the female and the skyline is similar in this Mandu *Kalpa-Sutra* to the *Kalpa-Sutra* from Jaunpur 1465 A.D. Dr. Archer, who first commented on these two manuscripts, suggests that both are departures from the standard Jain style. Against the 'nimble grace' of the Mandu *Kalpa-Sutra* pictures, he notices that 'heads are squarer' in the Jaunpur *Kalpa-Sutra* paintings and there is a new air of smart precision.

There has also been found a *Bostan* of Saadi, painted in Mandu in 1503 A.D. It was written by the calligrapher Shahwar, and illustrated by the artist Haji Muhammad. Certainly, it is not so well done as the highly skilful work in the Herat, Shiraz and Tabriz studios of the time, where the great schools of Persian painting were forming into the masterly achievements of Bihzad and other painters. But its execution in Mandu shows that the Central Indian court was in touch with the culture of the court of Sultan Hussain Mirza.

Page from Mandu Kalpa-Sutra with the emphatic further eye, 1439 A.D

Except for the colour schemes, the Mandu Bostan paintings have nothing very much of India about them. There is a rectangular band, filled with floral scrolls.

At the northern end of Malwa, Raja Man Singh Tomar had had painted arabesques on the ceiling of his palace in Gwalior fort. The moving female dance surrounded by floral motives is counterpoised against the nearby figure of an active drummer.

These figures are similar to those in the *Hamza-Namah* now in the University of Tubingen.

This background of the creative work in painting of that time, in and near Malwa, is important, because it was quite likely that in such an atmosphere a new synthesis might take place.

Page from Bostan of Saadi, painted in Mandu by Haji Muhammed, written by Calligrapher, Shahwar, 1503 A.D.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the manuscript of a cookery book, called *Nimat Namah* (Book of Delicacies), painted in Mandu, has recently been discovered in the India Office Library. This includes the favourite dishes and herbal mixtures of Sultan Ghayas-ud-din, and contains fifty exquisite pictures. Ostensibly, in these paintings, a naive but charming mixture of the Jain and Persian styles has taken place.

The figures, the flowers, and the general background of these pictures is obviously modelled, on the Persian provincial style of the Mandu Boston. But the contours of the figures are larger. The drawing is bolder. Some Indian foliage is introduced. The costumes of the men, as well as the jutting-out veils of the women, are localised. The figures in the profile appear at the same time as figures in three-fourths face. There is a deeper emotionalism in the gaiety of the scene. There are echoes of the colours then prevalent, of the Deccan, under the Vijayanagar empire, of Delhi paintings of the *Mahapurana* manuscript of Palam of 1540 A.D.; of the *Mrigavati* miniatures which were painted perhaps in Jaunpur; and of the *Laur Chanda* manuscript in the Prince of Wales Museum, as also of the one in Manchester.

Clearly, then, as Archer and Skelton suggest, some 'cross fertilisation,' has taken place between the Persian and the Indian kalams, though the impulses from the underlayers of sub schools are also important in estimating the synthesis. Not only that. The influence of the *Nimat Namah* travelled, towards nearby Mewar, Bundi and Kotah, towards Bundelkhand, to the Deccan, wherever Sultan Nasir-ud-din, son of Ghyas-ud-din, had contacts.

The emphatic Hinduisation of Mandu, under Mahmud II and his minister, Medni Rai, may have led to the absorption of much subterranean folk culture in the Mandu court.

Leaf from Nimat Namah; book of delicacies of Ghyas-ud-din Khalji, 1469-1501 A.D. Mandu, ascribed to C. 1500. India office Library, London.

In 1531 A.D. the Muslim ruler of Gujerat, apprehensive about the decay of Islamic culture, which might begin through the undue influence of Medni Rai on Mahmud II, attacked Mandu and ended the Khalji dynasty.

During the next quarter of a century, Mandu was ruled by a Pathan dynasty, of whom Sultan Bayazid, popularly known as Baz Bahadur, was the most illustrious.

This prince cultivated indigenous classical music, wrote poetry in Hindi and fell in love with a Hindu beauty, Rupmati, who was also a fine musician. His familiarity with classical Persian poetry may have inclined him to his belief in absolute love. But in the timeless days and nights of Mandu, the sound of daily festivals of song and dance, interspersed with the romantic agony, evoked a diathrymbic background for the people. The legend of Baz Bahadur's dalliances with Rupmati spread. Their songs were sung in the small towns and villages, not only of Malwa but in all the towns and villages where Hindi was understood. From the closed society itself, the inner longings of the folk found symbols in their own country, of Laila and Majnun, Shirin and Farhad, and Dhola Maru. What was more, the hero and the heroine could be seen in the flesh.

We do not know for certain whether Baz Bahadur patronised any paintings. Also, it is not clear whether some of the love poetry in which pictures appear were rendered in his honour. But there are some sets of paintings of Mewar, Jaunpur and Malwa, which have features in common and therefore lend themselves to interrelations.

The houses with tent-like sharp triangular tops, the full breasted women, taken over from the *Kalpa-Sutra* style—occur.

Painting from Laur Chanda romance, from Manchester Rylands library C. 1560 A.D. Fish eye takes the place of Jain 'Further eye'.

The lovers, Champavati and Vilhan, Painting from Avadhi romance, Jaunpur, C. 1525-1570 A.D. Now in Culture Centre, Ahmedabad

On the Jain base, parallel Sultanate influences were working in Jaunpur, Oudh. The Sanskrit love poems *Chaurapanchasika* and *Laurchanda* came to be painted, with a certain verve. Large eyes took the place of the Jain 'further eye', jutting veils and red backgrounds became dominant.

Scene from Gita Govinda, ascribed to 1540 A.D., Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. Hot colours and Hindu emotionalism

The early Rajasthani style, also begins to illuminate the Jain 'further eye' and introduces the big fish eye. The abstract, sharp nose also tends to disappear. The square head, with rounded face, and volumes of the human figure, emerge, against glowing red backgrounds. The *Gita Govinda* set from Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, dated to about 1540 A.D., seems, according to Pramod Chandra, to have received some Muslim influence; though the trees and the foliage and lush background relates these pictures more to Mewar.

Illustration from Mirgavati, Avadhi romance related to the Chaurapanchasika style and Gita Govinda of Prince of Wales Museum 1606 A.D. Bharat Kala Bhavan, ascribed to C. 1540. A.D.

The *Mirgavati* illustrations of an Avadhi romance in the collection of the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras, are simpler and more stylised and still echo the angularities of the Jain styles. Again the 'further eye' has disappeared and been replaced by the big fish eye. The composition is more emotional and the pronounced edges of costume, as well as the gestures of the figures, are used to energise the scenes. The Kulhadar turban and the Islamic jama appears, with the geometrical sash.

Archer further demonstrates the continuation in a Ragini picture of c. 1550, Victoria and Albert Museum, of the duck, lotus and five-pointed flower, from the *Nimat Namah* of Mandu. And, with Mr. Basil Gray, he concurs in considering pictures in which Bilhana appears to be the departure point for the Rajasthani painting of Mewar of 1650 A.D. The Mandu Ragini of 1550 A.D., Mr. Archer regards as the precursor of the later Malwa Raginis, such as the *Vilaval Ragini* of 1630 A.D.

Further, he sees the development, as from Mandu, of a sub style in the Narsingarh Ragini pictures of 1650 A.D. and 1680 A.D., in the Kanoria collection. In the first picture, the thick foliage and the dim grove of trees, the impassioned heroine, with the symbolic peacocks portending desire, are redolent of the romantic escape world built up by the traditions connected with Baz Bahadur and perhaps accepted in small courts. The arabesques are derived from the Indo-Persian miniatures of Mandu. In the second picture, the local tradition of the Hindu wife ministering to the lover comes through. The architecture is mixed Indo-Persian and the use of reds and blues is more emotional.

The important paintings of the *Chaurapanchisika* style seem, says Anand Krishna, to be 'a direct outcome of the *Mahapurana-Mirgavat* school'. This he relates to the Tubingen *Hamza Namah* illustrations, specially in representation of the female form. He considers the *Chaurapanchasika* style as simply a more evolved stage of the same group, and he attributes it to a slightly later period (c 1550-80–A.D). 'The late sets of this group, for example, the *Gita Govinda* illustrations in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, almost seem to protrude into the *Chavand Ragamala* of 1606 A.D. of the Mewari style, and therefore the *Chaurapanchasika* illustrations must be related to Mewar. Beginnings of this style may also be traced in the *Supasanaka-chariyam* illustrations done at Delaware (Mewar) in 1432 A.D. Finally, my discovery of wall painting similar in style to the *Chaurapanchasika* paintings in Chittore Fort leaves no doubt about the existence of this school at Mewar. Besides stylistic affinities, the costume types found in the *Chaurapanchasika* and other illustrations belong to Mewar, or generally speaking to Rajasthan, which seem to have been adopted by Akbar. The same style seems to have been in Malwa in its local form, as is suggested by the Indian elements in the *Nimat Namah* paintings. Perhaps the three other documents from this region were the *Hamza Namah* illustration in Tubingen, the *Laur Chanda* manuscripts, the bulk of which is in the Prince of Wales Museum, and the *Laur Chanda* manuscript in Manchester.'

The picture that emerges from the above description suggests that a common school of painting, independent of the Apabhramsa school, existed in the 16th century. While including local variations, it encompassed a large portion of the western and central regions, as well as Madhyadesa (the Middle India). This style in turn gave birth to popular sub-schools discovered later at different centres like Malwa, Mewar, Bundi etc. in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries.

Dhanasri Ragini, Malwa 1680 A.D. The romantic style of Baz Bahadur of 1630 A.D. is carried on with more fullness and depth

11. Bundelkhand

Female dancer, with musician framed in arabesque, on a ceiling at southern end of palace of Raja Man Singh Tomar, Gwalior Fort, ascribed by Anand Krishan to C. 1550 A.D.

The area where the new vernacular of northern India, *Brajbhasa*, was forming, after the break up of Classical Sanskrit, includes the hills, plains and forests of Bundelkhand, under the shadows of the Vindhyachal range.

The Bundela Rajputs, who settled here in the mediaeval period, had been overshadowed by the more spectacular feudal kingdoms of Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner.

Under Maharaja Bir Singh Deo, of Datya and Orcha, fine palace-forts were built and wall paintings done. The fragments of these murals resemble the friezes in Lahore Fort. Bir Singh Deo lived long enough to be the contemporary of the Mughal Emperors, Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jehan. His craftsmen certainly knew of the fine work going on at Agra, Delhi and Lahore. But, it is also likely that he benefitted from the tradition that had been established through the magnificent tile-work in the palace of Raja Man Sigh Tomar of Gwalior even before the arrival of Babur in India.

At any rate, there came to be written, in Orcha, Capital of Bundelkhand, a book called *Rasikapriya* by the great poet, Keshav das, in 1591 A.D. Apart from being a book of poetic

Rasikapriya of Kesavdas c. 1700 A.D., in Malwa style, with shapely cylindrical trees.

criticism, it dealt with the Krishna legend and described the various forms of heroes and heroines, *Nayak* and *Nayikas*.

This manuscript came to be illustrated about the time it was written, probably in Orcha itself. The miniatures in this book, which are mostly in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, retain the linear rhythm of the Jain pictures. They have vibrant colours, red, blue and gold. They show Mughal style profiles of the time of Jehangir (1605-1627 A.D.) The fame of the *Rasikapriya* spread far and wide over Northern India. And it came to be illustrated frequently.

In Orcha, the later relaxed Mughal style seems to have been completely influential in the paintings, in bright colours, on the ceilings of the pavilions in the Raj Mandir, between 1720-1740 A.D.

Under Maharaja Shatrujit in 1800 A.D., some miniatures came to be painted in Datya, in what has been called the Classical Bundela style, which is a refinement of the later Mughal. Among these the portraits of Shatrujit has imbibed the Imperial manner.

12. Deccani Painting

There had been an independant Islamic Kingdom, the Bahamani from 1347 A.D. in the Deccan, with its capital at Bidar. This state disintegrated and five smaller Sultanates were founded on its ruins: Bidar, Berar, Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmednagar.

After much dissension, these five Sultanates combined together in 1565 A.D. and defeated the great Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar, at the battle of Talikota.

Apart from the wall paintings of Vijayanagar temples, the submerged folk elements had subsisted side by side with miniature paintings in Jain *Kalpa-Sutras* and other religious books, as in the north. There were some Persian style paintings by local artists. But no synthesis took place, under the Sultanates of the Deccan, of these disparate styles, as happened in the Mandu *Nimat Namah*.

The influence of the paintings in this cookery book of Malwa, however, was to make itself felt in the far flung landscape of the Deccan.

Ahmednagar

The hero of the confederacy of the war against Vijayanagar was Sultan Hussain Nizam Shah I of Ahmednagar. On his death, his Begum, Khanzada Humayun, acted as regent for their young son, Murtaza I.

During the period of her regency (1565-69 A.D.), the poem entitled *Tarif-i-Hussain Shahi*, in praise of Sultan Hussain, was written and illustrated. The paintings in this manuscript show the unmistakable mixture of the Persian and Deccan pictorial elements, with some influence of the Mandu *Nimat Namah*. The orange, yellow, green, ochre and purple of the native sensibility are beginning to be fused with the Iranian lapis lazuli in such a picture as the *Dohad*. The figures are idealised women in Hindu costumes. The striped scarf, with which the servant is fanning the queen, clearly derives from the *Nimat Namah*. The legend by which a tree blossoms at the embrace or touch of a woman, called *Dohad,* was current for centuries in Hindu India. The cypresses of provincial Persian Paintings are mixed up with the red flame of the forest tree with two chenar trees, and edges of date palms, as well as wild foliage of the Deccan.

Dohad scene from Tarif-i-Hussain Shahi, in praise of Sultan Hussain, painted under his Queen Khanzada Humayun: Hinduised costume, with the scarf reminiscent of Mandu

The Persian elements in this *Dhanasri Ragini* are more emphatic than the Indian motifs. The jallied windows are Persian, the upper part being fashioned as the top of the mehrabs. The foliage is Indian, the costumes of the females are Deccani, adapted from the Vijayanagar Empire, which the Muslim kingdoms had defeated, but from which they inherited a good deal of the indigenous tradition. The lovely female, probably a princess, is writing a letter to her lover. Her attitude is in the mode of *Dhanasri*, showing distress. The clothes are red and gold, except in the case of the maid, whose sari is white with the pallav of gold. The ornate peacock in the window perhaps symbolises the love season of the rains. The two portions of the picture are symbolic, lifting the exalted humans to the upper plane.

Dhanasri Ragini: Lady in distress writing letter. Mixed Persian and Hindu elements, dated by Basil Gray to about 1570 A.D

Bijapur

In the Bijapur kingdom, the Sultans seem to have cultivated a more intensive tradition of the arts than elsewhere in the Deccan of the time. Ali Adil Shah I (1558-1580, A.D.) patronised various artists. Under this prince, the manuscript entitled *Najum-ul-ulum* (Stars of the Sciences) was illustrated. The miniatures in this book seem to derive from the wall paintings of the Vijayanagar Empire. Except that the Persian combination of calligraphy and illustrations has taken place, the figures in the illustration here are in the mixed Hindu-Persian style. The flowing *Pallav* of the costume being almost like the *Nimat Namah* scarfs, while the two heads are crowned with Persian style caps. The flames which spring from the hands and from behind the heads, are almost copies of bronze sculptures of South India. The stems of brown grass on the pale purple background are of Deccani inspiration.

Leaf from Nujam-ul-ulum, encyclopedia, Stars of sciences, Bijapur, dated by Douglas Barret to 1570 A.D.

The Bijapur court had adopted the Indian classical music. Both Ali Adil Shah I, and his nephew, Ibrahim Adil Shah II, patronised this art, the latter prince being also a practitioner of calligraphy, of drawing and a singer as well as a poet. The Raga paintings of Bijapur seem to have been executed in his reign. In the *Ragini* the figures of *Dohad* have been stylised. The tufts of grass in the background from *Najum-ul-ulum*, the domes and minarets, as well as the roof of the air house, are adapted from the new Deccani architecture. The composition is integral. The fusion of the Persian colour sense with the Indian has been delicately achieved. The mood of the raga is suggested in the intense drama.

Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur, Patron of the arts(1580-1626 A.D;) Portrait, dated by Basil Gray to 1590-95 A.D. Fine draughtsmanship and lively composition, influenced by Mughal portraiture

Vasanta Raga

From the *Ragini* to the *Vasanta Raga* of Ahmednagar (1591-95 A.D.): the transition is even more accomplished. A lovely fantasy world is created. The prince and his beloved are shown on the swing-bed, with two maids shooting colour on the couple and the third maid about to sing. The treatment of the round trees with white blossoms and birds with bits of bright fruit, gives emotional depth to the lyrical pink background. The golden sky contrasts with the black hexagonal pond. The whole composition is masterly. The transparent veils of the women have probably come from the *Chaurapanchasika* illustration. The pond has been stylised, along with the foliage and the birds, beyond the *Nimat Namah*. The rectangular framework from Persia is made vibrant with slender forms of the Indian women. The spring festival of Holi creates a warm feeling of abandon. The painting has the mellow fragrance of the mature Deccani style.

Vasanta Raga: Hinduised painting from Ahmednagar, dated by W. C. Archer C. 1575 A.D. by Douglas Barret as 1591-95 A.D. Fine synthesis of Hindu and Muslim styles

Deccani Portraits

The portraits done in Ahmednagar, specially *Burhan Nizam Shah*, have definite affinities with the Imperial manner of Agra and Sikri, except that the 'further eye' is retained here. The three-fourths profile has probably come from the Lepakshi tradition. The bright colours, vermillion and dark green are from the Deccan, as well as the golden dust of the background, but the softer shades, adapted from Mughal paintings.

The distinctive Deccani contribution is the assimilation, in the early 17th century, of European naturalism and a kind of three-dimensional depth, as in the painting '*Lord of the Deccan*,' which may be a portrait of Murtaza II, the profligate prince, who tried to keep the Imperialists of Agra at bay in the Deccan, in association with the Abysinnian General Malik Amber and the traitorous Khan Jahan Lodi, Governor of the Deccan, under Shah Jehan.

In Bijapur, the indigenous Deccani base was worked upon with an even greater finish under Mughal influence. For instance, the fresco-like portrait of *Ibrahim Adil Shah II* (1580-1626-A.D.) and his courtiers, is a superb example of the unique admixture of influences. The sweep of the brush strokes in this painting, the grouping of the attendants behind the fundamental image, the agitation of the procession, combine to produce a masterly miniature, with dexterous use of space. The rhythmic treatment of the clouds above, and the intricate dynamic of the foliage below, show a rich palette. The use of white to suggest extension of space out of the picture is done with uncanny skill.

Later, in the 16th-17th centuries, in Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golkonda, many pictures came to be painted under the influence of the Mughal style, which was established by the Emperor Akbar in the early 16th century and which was extended by his successors, Jehangir and Shah Jehan.

Portrait of Burhan Nizam Shah II of Ahmednagar, 1591-95 A.D.
Possibly influenced by Portraiture of Mughal court

Stylistically near the *Portrait of Burhan Nizam Shah,* this picture of the sleeping prince, perhaps *Murtaza II,* is more ornate. The peacock-like feather of the foliage, the gold used on the costumes, and the jewellery, as well as the utensils, indicate prosperity in Ahmednagar court inspite of much disruption. Murtaza II was put on the throne by General Malik Ambar in 1602 A.D. and later put to death by Ambar's son, Fatheh Khan in 1630 A.D. The luxury surrounding the indolent prince shows that feudal decadence surrounded the puppet throughout his reign.

Portrait entitled 'Lord of the Deccan', suggested by Douglas Barret to be Murtaza II (1602-30 A.D). A decadent ease-loving prince enjoying his siesta

Todi Ragini

This *Todi Ragini*, obviously a Deccani picture, in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., could be from Golconda painted in the late 17th century. It retains the foliage of the Vijayanagar period, as well as the Hindu costume, but betrays some Mughal influence in the drawing and in the softer colours. The theme was also treated in Bijapur, with similar depth and affection.

Todi Ragini: Deccani style, ascribed to late 17th century by Ettinghausen Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C

The Golconda Sultans were even more prolific patrons of art.

The scene showing *Abul Hasan Qutub Shah* Painted in Golconda in C. 1660 A.D. improves upon the Ahmednagar portrait of *Burhan Nizam Shah*, with a rare sumptuousness, delicacy and charm. The composition is a stereotype, borrowed from the Mughal manner of the early Shah Jehan period, but the total effect is infused with the spirit of the Deccan.

From Golconda many kalams sprang up in Hyderabad, Sholapur Cuddapah, Kurnool and Wanparthy. The rich colours of the folk entered into these sub-styles, as well as a certain depth of feeling, with the intense musical rhythms of the devotional Hindu Culture below the court cultures.

The exotic European dress as well as the furniture and shading of figures, coming into the Deccan through Portuguese Goa, was exquisitely assimilated into the miniatures, as in *A Prince in the Garden* (1670-80 A.D.) by Rahim Dakni, as also in the *Lady with the Myna Bird* (1605 A.D.) from the Chester Beatty Collection. The individualisation of the portrait here probably took shape directly under the influence of the Mughal portrait. The three-fourths face, the trees and the plants and the mountains, were retained from the Indo-Persian manner, but Deccanised.

Portrait of Abul Hasan Qutub Shah of Golconda as a young man. Golconda C. 1660 A.D., influenced by Mughal refinement and sophistication

13. Mughal Painting

In 1525 A.D. Babur, a descendant of Timur on his father's side, of Changez Khan on his mother's side, came down from Kabul in search of the splendours of Hind. He was disillusioned because the wars of northern India had left the country desolate. But he won the battle of Panipat against Ibrahim Lodi of Delhi and established the Mughal dynasty. He died soon after. And his son, Humayun, was driven out by the Pathan king Sher Shah.

Humayun took refuge in the court of Shah Tehmasp of Persia. Here he re-equipped an army and waited patiently for his return. During his leisure hours, he acquired a love of painting, which was flourishing in Persia under Shah Tehmasp, after it had achieved great heights in the Herat workshops of Bihzad and his followers under Sultan Hussain Mirza. And he took two Persian masters, Mir Syed Ali and Khawaja Abu Sammad, to Kabul and then to India with him.

These painters gave lessons in colour work to young Akbar. The prince early saw the miniatures of Bihzad and his school. And his impressionable mind must have conceived the ambition of seeing an atmosphere in his father's court like that of Herat under Shah Rukh, Gawahar Shad and Sultan Hussain Mirza.

Humayun returned to India in 1556 A.D. and got back the throne of Delhi. Unfortunately, he died a year later. And his fourteen year old son, Akbar, came to the throne.

One of Bihzad's masterly study of horses, absorbing previous Persian styles of high horizon and individualisation of each figure, late 15th century, Cairo Museum

Portrait of Shaybani Khan, ascribed to Bihzad

The brilliant young Akbar began to extend the Mughal hold beyond the few villages around the capital of Delhi. And, in the next twenty years, he was to found the Mughal Empire, which lasted nearly three centuries. Apart from his qualities as a general and administrator, Akbar was a tolerant and wise prince. He married a Hindu princess of Jaipur, and deliberately began to reconcile the Persian and Central Asian traditions of his inheritance with the indigenous Hindu culture. In fact, after hearing many debates between Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Parsi priests, he initiated a broad religion of his own, *Din-I-Illahi*, which might reconcile the contending faiths. He had himself learned to draw at the age of thirteen, and, among other things, he established an atelier in the newly planned capital city of Fatehpur Sikri.

Hamam scene by Bihzad, showing mobility in composition, late 15th century, British Museum

Madonna and the Child, by Mir Syed Ali. Portrait study done in Persia, early 16th century

Arrest of Shah Mali by Taqi Khan Qochi, drawn by Khwaja Abus Sammad, 1556 A.D. Bodlein library, Oxford

The two masters, Mir Syed Ali and Khawaja Abu Sammad, were joined by several Hindu artists. And the glory and power of Akbar began to be painted in hundreds of pictures in Agra and in the new capital, Fatehpur Sikri. The Emperor was so fond of painting that he always took some of the court artists with him on his journeys, whether he went to hunt or on a forced march with the army. Thus the Mughal school of painting began as the attempt at synthesis of the Persian kalam and the native Hindu workmanship. Akbar deprecated the decorative Persian style in poetry and, by implication, in painting, and preferred the Hindu sense of degrees of reality on various planes.

The attempt to fuse the Persian and Indian styles is not very successful in the fresco-like cloth paintings of the *Hamza Namah*, commissioned by Humayun, but really begun by Akbar some years after he had established kingship, about 1567 A.D. The Persian elements coexist in the illustrations of this book,

with the large dynamic brush strokes derived from Hindu wall painting techniques. Much of the Akbarid painting thus remains a mixture, and does not become a fusion.

On one side is the mixture of various elements in the *Hamza Namah*, on the other the Hinduised *Tuti Namah*, and on still another side is the *Babur Namah* in the dominantly Persian miniature style.

There is one picture in the *Hamza Namah*, for instance, showing the *Giant Zamurud asleep*. Obviously, it is in the enlarged dramatic Indian wall painting style, though the figuration is still Persian. But in the upper corner of this picture, there are two women on a well, with fish eyes. They also wear Rajasthani clothes. And their pitchers bear the indigenous decorations.

Clearly, then, Mir Syed Ali and Khawaja Abu Sammad, had Indian collaborators. They also probably slowly adopted the Indian locale themselves in deference to the Emperor's wish to merge Muslim and Hindu strains into a new unity.

In the *Tuti Namah* (Tales of a Parrot) painted, in 1565-1580 A.D. about the same time as the first *Hamza* pictures, the hand of the Hindu painters is clearly evident. *The Parrot At Court* by the prolific Basavan brings Rajasthani buildings to the fore on a flat plane with emphasis on the emotions of the characters in the drama, individualising the features of personages.

There is a finesse in the paintings of the *Diwan* of Anwari of 1588 A.D., done in Lahore fort, to which Akbar had shifted his capital in order to consolidate his hold on the north. Fish-eyed Hindu females play on Indian instruments to an Uzbek dancer in one of these pictures. The Persian high horizon is fused into a dramatic composition, in the mature Akbarid manner.

Painting from Tales of a Parrot by Basawan 1565-1580 A.D: shows extension of indigenous technique into the Mughal court

The bold sweep of the contours of the giant Zamurad, under the small gnarled tree with the monkeys and the birds, seems to derive from the Indian wall painting tradition. The scout Kamsaj and the lion are from the Persian miniature. The architecture of the village and the Rajasthani females on the well with the buffaloes on the side, are from Indian folk tradition. The mixture is fairly well composed and begins the Akbaride style.

Hamza's Scout, Kamsaj, searching for his lost steed, while Hamza's enemy, the giant Zamurad, sleeps. Notice Indian women on the well in corner, Hamza Namah C. 1570 A.D

Babur shown laying Aram Bagh on the Char Bagh principle, painted late 16th century, A.D

In one of the *Babur Namahs*, painted under Akbar, probably after 1560, there is a painting showing Babur laying the garden, probably the Aram Bagh, on the banks of the Jamna in Agra, where he rested during his stay in the capital.

The picture reproduces the Char Bagh pattern, with the rivulets inbetween, which was Babur's concept of landscape gardening.

The artist has reproduced the passionate love for gardens which obsessed Babur, inspite of the hard campaigning he had to do after the battle of Panipat. The Emperor's aesthetic delights, reproduced in his Memoirs, show a fine sensibility, which must have inspired his grandson Akbar to his own visions of a cultured life.

Portrait of Tansen, musician in Akbar's court, late 16th century A.D

Portrait of a European.
Late 16th century

The painters were also shown European pictures brought as gifts to the Emperor from his visit to Cambay in Gujarat in 1572 A.D. And these became more and more influential during the next ten years. The Persian principle of decorative isolation and the fantasy of Tabriz gradually gave way to the Hindu curved line and absorbed the western three dimensions, to express scenes of violence and conflict.

Abul Fazal, the favourite of Akbar, who wrote about the monarch's deeds in the famous *Ain-i-Akbari*, noted that the Emperor was very pleased with the Hindu painters, Basawan, Daswanath and Kesudas. As the Hindu and Muslim painters collaborated actively, one drawing the outline, the other filling in the colours, the third doing the border, the native painters learnt the Persian manner and later even painted parallel pictures for the work of the Persian poet, Nizami, and other foreign books. On the other hand, the Persian painters imbibed something of the depth of feeling of the Hindus. This comes through the use of deeper colours for buildings, trees, foliage and the characterisation of the face. The Emperor's pioneer efforts to import the techniques of the European renaissance brought in new perspectives.

Akbar deliberately sought to connect his court artists with the tradition of wall-painting that was the primary source of inspiration, enjoyment and amusement to the people of Hindustan. And he had some of the walls of the palaces in Fatehpur Sikri painted. The broad treatment is derived from the walls of Rajasthani forts and palaces. The colours are softer. The drawing is vivacious. The Central Asian figures are being Indianised. The secular theme enters painting.

Wall painting on North wall in Khwabgah of Akbar in Fatehpur Sikri, shows assimilation of Hindu style fresco from Amber

The miniatures in the *Akbar Namah* are typical of the action picture style evolved in Akbar's court. For instance, in such a painting as *The Emperor inspecting the building of Fatehpur Sikri*, the three-dimensional features crowd into the Persian style two-dimensions, within the rectangular framework. The groups are not only shown on planes, one above the other, but they are sought to be integrated into a dramatic, almost European style, composition, with the main focus of the painter on Akbar himself. The linear outline of the figures is still Persian in its fluid movement, while the placing of the mound and the buildings is derived from Persia. And yet there is a homely Indian touch about the whole miniature, the initiation of a classical organization of forms from rough beginnings.

The brilliant many-sided genius of Akbar was built on his care for detail. Here he is shown advising the stone cutters. The composition is vibrant and dynamic. C. 1598-1602 A.D

Akbar hunting painted in 1590 A.D., shows mastery of composition of a complex scene. The European sense of volume and light and shade are mixed with the Persian high horizon and the Hindu emphasis on the emotion-charged drama.

The vitalist action picture style of the Akbar period is evident in the painting of Akbar hunting near Agra. Akbarnamah C. 1598-1602 A.D

Still more dramatic is the *Siege of Ranthambor*, c. 1598-1602 A.D., in which the bullocks are shown dragging guns up the hill, with dynamic brushstrokes which reproduce the violent rhythms of battle. A masterpiece of the Akbar school, this picture releases the formal Persian miniature into the dynamic Hindu flow.

A more energetic action picture than any other in the Akbar Namah, showing tremendous energies of colour and line, in a vital composition

Among the many manuscripts for which parallel pictures were commissioned from the painters of the court, were *Harivamsa*, the *Razm-Namah* or the Persian translation of the *Mahabharata*, *Ayyar-i-Danish* and the *Anwar-i-Suhaili* or the *Lights of Canopus*.

In these paintings are seen different strains. The reconstructions on the lines of the Herat School under Bihzad run parallel with the large contours of Indian walls and Italian style perspective above the Persian high horizon.

The treatment of elephants in the *Ayyar-i-Danish* shows the inclination of the painters towards large brushstrokes, delineating action, in the context of the Persian rectangle.

The renaissance hero also introduced the fashion for the Emperor's portrait. And nobles were shown dressed up in western costumes.

The style which was evolved in Akbar's time still remained eclectic, but evolved its own vigour. All the three elements—the Persian, the Indian and the European, began to be adjusted. As the Emperor wished to see the incidents around his magnificent court recorded, most of the pictures were glorifications in portraiture of his and his noblemen's exploits, moods and fancies. The Persian fairy tale world was disappearing. The world of actions and events was taking its place. The soft Iranian colours gave place to deeper tones. The picture began to acquire the Hindu emotional densities.

The Emperor set a new fashion in portraiture, as in the highly individualised picture of Babur dictating his memoirs.

Abul Fazal says in the *Ain-i-Akbari:*

'His Majesty himself sat for his likeness, and also ordered to have the likeness taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed, those that have passed away have received a new life, and those who are still alive have immortality promised them.'

The hare crushed by elephant, by Surjan, Ayyar-i-Danish, 1605 A.D., Chester Beatty collection, Dublin

Abul Fazal further records in the *Ain-i-Akbari :*

'One day at a private party of friends, His Majesty, who had conferred on several painters the pleasure of drawing him, remarked: ''There are many that hate painting, but such men I dislike. It seems to me that a painter has quite peculiar means of recognising God, for a painter in sketching anything that has life and in devising limbs, one after the other, in his work, can bestow individuality on his work, and thus he is forced to think of God, the giver of life, and thus increase knowledge''.'

In this way, the Emperor got over the taboo of Islam against painting.

But he was a practical genius and helped the artists more directly.

Says Abul Fazal :

'He gives it (painting) every encouragement, as he looks upon it as a means both of study and amusement. Hence the art flourished and many painters have obtained great reputations. The work of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the clerks. He then confers rewards according to the excellence of workmanship, or increase the monthly salaries. Much progress was made in the commodities required by painters and the correct prices for such articles were carefully ascertained. The mixture of colours has specially been improved. The pictures thus received a hitherto unknown finish. Most excellent painters are now to be found and masterpieces worthy of a Bihzad may be placed at the side of the wonderful works of European painters, who have attained worldwide fame. The minuteness and detail, the general finish, boldness of execution etc., now observed in pictures are incomparable. Even inanimate objects look as if they have life. More than a hundred painters have become famous masters of the art, while the number of those who approach perfection, or of those who are middling, is very large. This is specially true of the Hindus. Their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few, indeed, in the whole world are found equal to them.'

Prince witnessing dance and music from Anwar-i-Suhaili C. 1600-1605 A.D.

In the *Razmnamah* manuscript C. 1600 A.D. translation of the *Mahabharat* into Persian, there are sumptuous miniatures by various artists. The brushwork here goes beyond the Persian Kalam, deeper into Hindu emotionalism. The colours are more thickly put on. The drama of the situation is emphasised. Each figure is individualised in the composition.

In *Krishna lifting Mount Goverdhan*, there is almost a synthesis of the Indo-Persian kalams, where previously, in most pictures, it was a mixture. The treatment of the figures is indigenous. The Persian rock formations and the high horizon of the Mount Goverdhan are effectively absorbed into the composition. The decisive movement is caught in the portrayal of the miracle.

Krishna holding up Mount Goverdhan. Razmnamah C. 1600 A.D. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Shows Hindu depth of feeling

Jehangir

Under Jehangir (c. 1605-1627 A.D.), Mughal painting began its search for perfection. The new Emperor knew the products of the great romantic Persian schools of Herat and Shiraz and admired the work of Bihzad. Also, he was even more in love with his grandeur as the great Mughal than his father. And he had inherited from his Hindu mother a certain mystic strain that led him to undertake pilgrimages to various shrines. As a crown prince, he had evinced deep interest in painting. In fact, already as a prince he had set up his own workshop apart from his father's large studio. And he had patronised Farukh Baig Kalmak from Central Asia, and Aqa Raza, a follower of Bihzad, as well as the latter's son, Abu Hasan.

Jehangir preferred pictures of hunting scenes, birds and flowers. And, of course, he continued the tradition of portraiture begun by his father. He collected a large library of illustrated manuscripts and recorded 'his praise for that destiny, which gave such rare things into his hands.' He presented his court painters to the English Ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, and gave the foreigner some portraits to show in England.

Such was this Emperor's passion for this art, that he wrote, boastfully, in his Memoirs *Tozak-i-Jehangiri*, about his capacities as a connoisseur :

'As regard myself, my liking for painting and my practice in judging it, have arrived at such a point that when any work is brought to me, either of deceased artists or those of the present day, without the names being told to me, I say, on the spur of the moment, that it is the work of such and such a man. And if there be a picture containing many portraits, and each face be the work of different masters, I can discover which face is the work of each of them. If any person has put in the eye and an eyebrow of a face, I can perceive whose work the original face is and who has painted the eye and the eyebrow.'

The style under Jehangir may be called 'realistic'. The Emperor wanted a picture 'to represent a theme, as in itself it really is.' But he was interested in the wondrous and the beautiful, though from the point of view of amusement and instruction, as is obvious in the pictures of birds and flowers which he asked his painters to prepare.

Of course, the Persian and Indian painters under his patronage went further. They attempted a deeper fusion than had been possible under Akbar. So that the fine lyrical Persian brush work modulated the emotional hot colours. Ochre reds, yellows, purples, mauves were diversified and diluted into soft blues, greys and greens, pinks and whites. And the predominantly European three dimensional technique began to be adopted frequently. In the portraits, delicate toning and modelling were introduced as well as shading. This helped to bring out the character of the person portrayed. The delicacy and finish attained great sensitiveness. Grey or green backgrounds set off to advantage the rose and ivory coloured faces, with transparent white muslin costumes or gold worked brocades.

Thus we can see a development from the sense of glory of Akbar to the refinement of Jehangir's aestheticism, a transition from the earlier vitality to a certain sense of sophistication and luxury. And there is a deliberate art for art's sake emphasis, a love of erotic scenes, which imbues the work under the new Emperor with a unique charm. The catholic taste of Jehangir led to the adoption of certain European symbols of the king as near God, the ring of the halo, the golden flying cherubs, the hour glass and the globe.

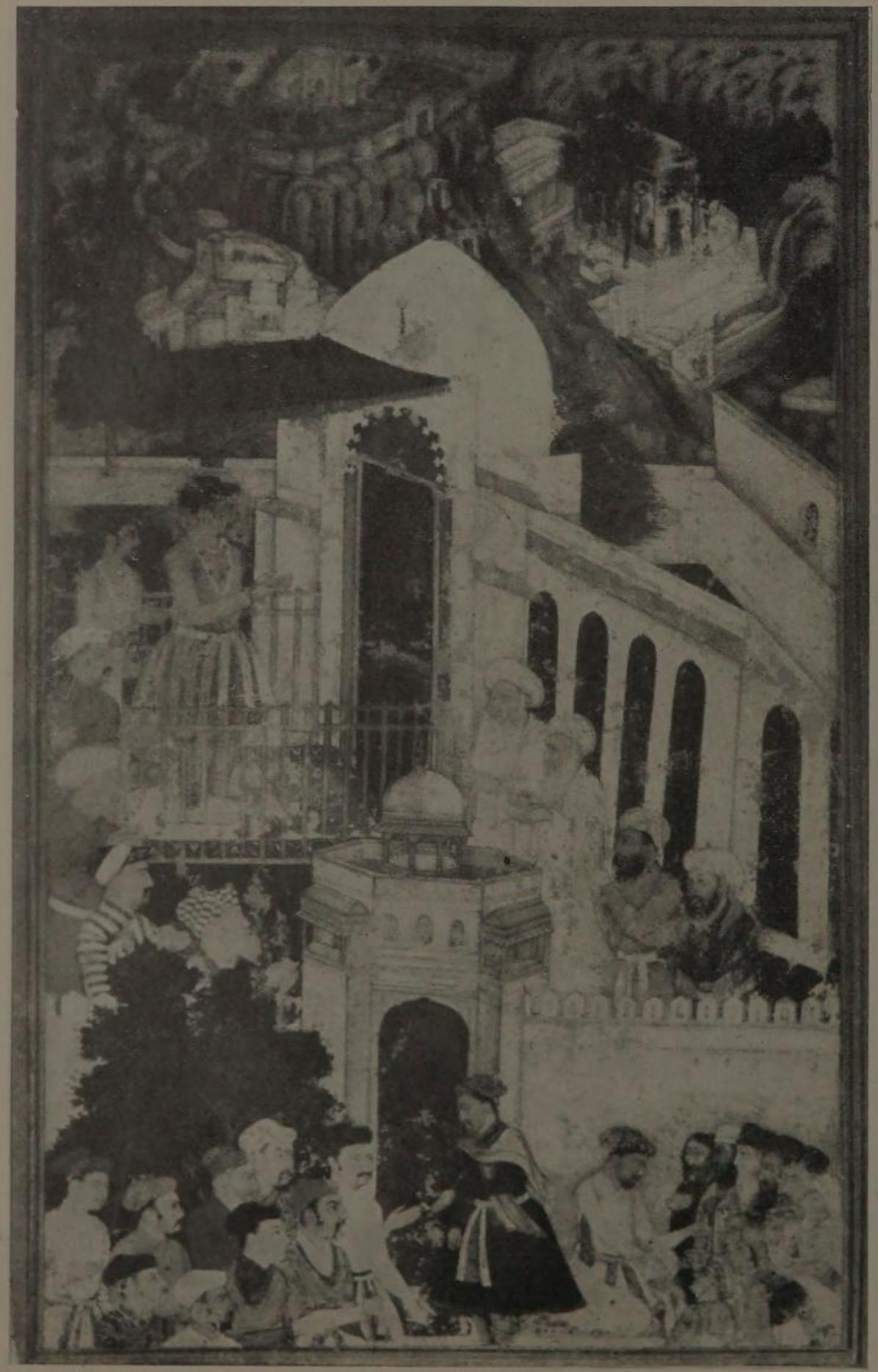
Jehangir celebrating Abpashi Festival, C. 1615, National Museum of India, New Delhi

Portrait by Aga Raza. Indian Museum, Calcutta, early 17th century A.D., shows renewed incursion of Persian influence

In the *Portrait* by Aqa Raza, the Persian element is emphasised.

In the *Portrait of Mir Muhammed with the heads of Jehangir and Shah Jahan inset*, there is a transition from Persian decorativeness to Indian characterisation.

Portrait of Mir Muhammad with the heads of Jehangir and Shah Jehan inset, by the Uzbek, Muhammad Nadir, whom Jehangir patronised, C. 1615 A.D., British Museum, London



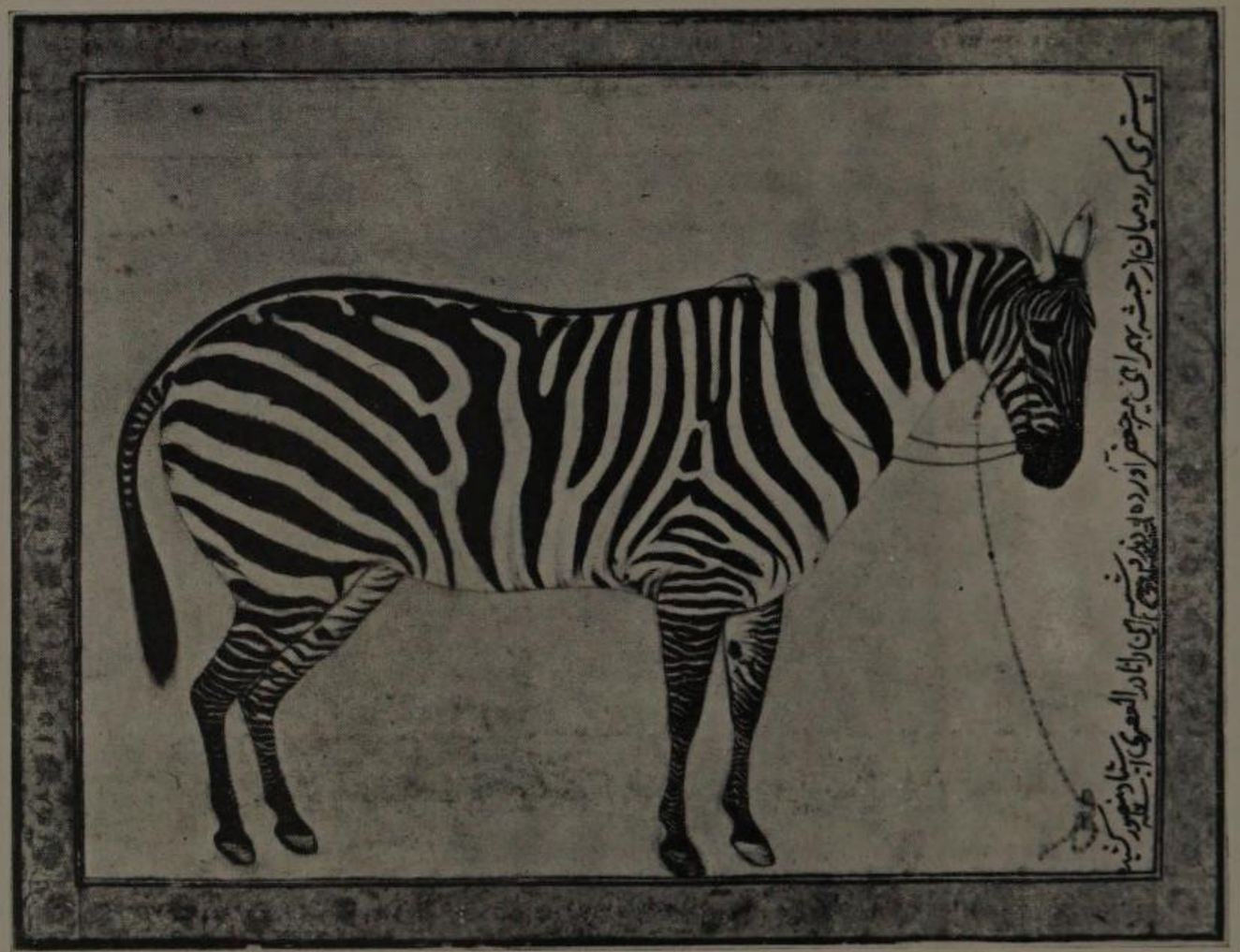
In later groups, such as *Jehangir at the Tomb of Moin-ud-din Chisti*, there is the transition from the Persian kalam towards the drama of the native style. The multiple planes, on which the early Rajasthani pictures were being composed, are effectively fused here with the Persian high horizon. The depth, which was seldom in the Persian works, is brought in by colour contrasts, crowding of figures into dramatic situations and individualisation of faces.

Jehangir at the shrine of Moin-ud-Din Chisti. 1613 A.D., Rampur library. Rampur, U. P.

In the *Celebration of the Marriage of Prince Khurram* 1615 A.D. an almost wall painting effect is achieved. The Persian kalam here surrendered to the indigenous mural. The procession is arranged in vibrant groups, each figure being related to the other. The sumptuousness, which was to be seen later under Shah Jehan, is inaugurated here.

Marriage of Prince Khurram, showing assimilation of Hindu wall painting technique. C. 1615 A.D., British Museum, London

Turkey Cock from Goa. ornately painted by Mansur. 1612 A.D

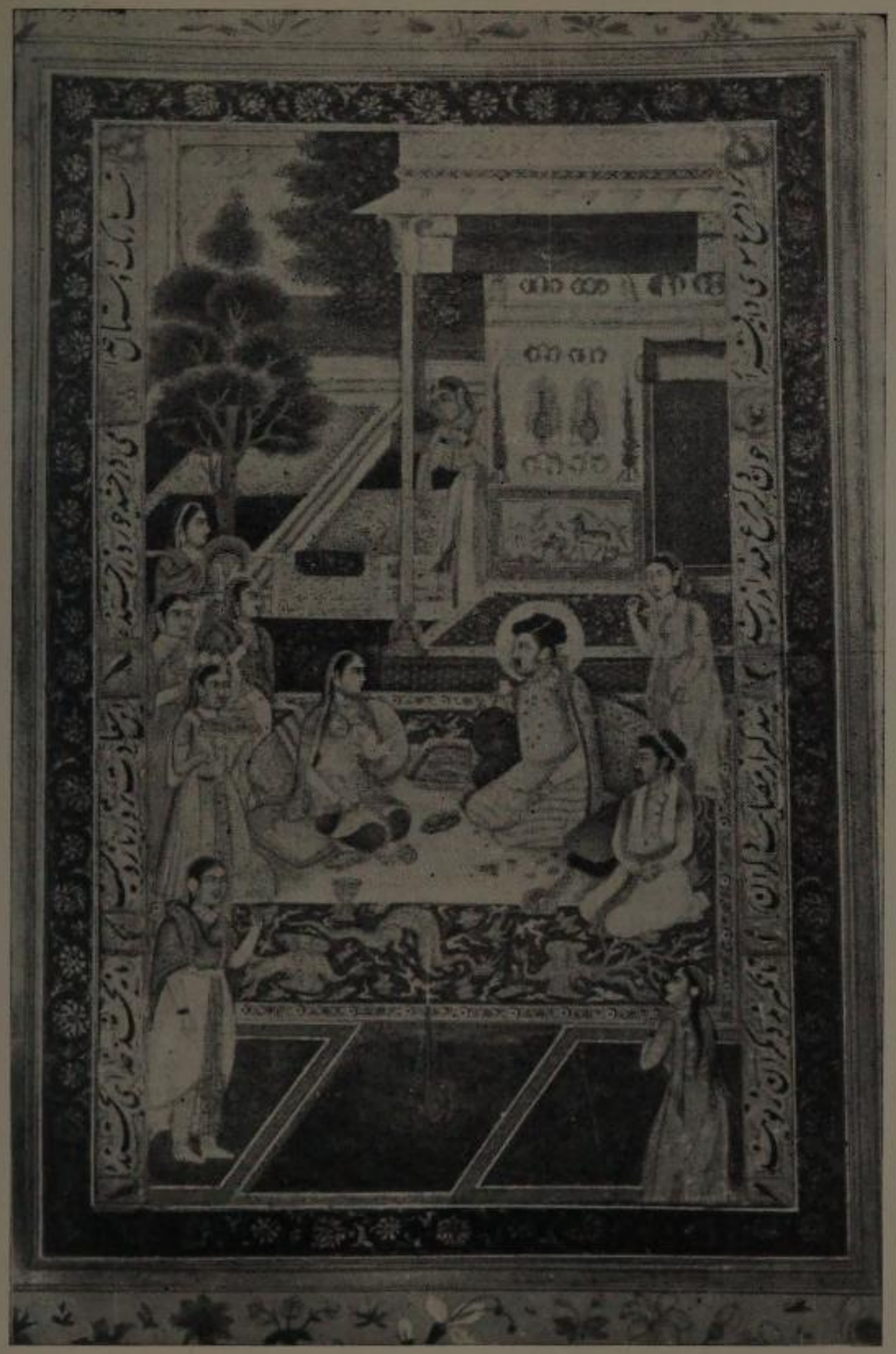


Exotic Zebra from Africa, painted with fine lyrical stripes by Mansur. Early 17th century A.D

The portraits of birds and flowers are similarly imbued with character, specially in the works of Mansur. The Emperor became increassingly obsessed with the unity of all life and loved nature as the expression of God's greatness through the design implicit in His creation.

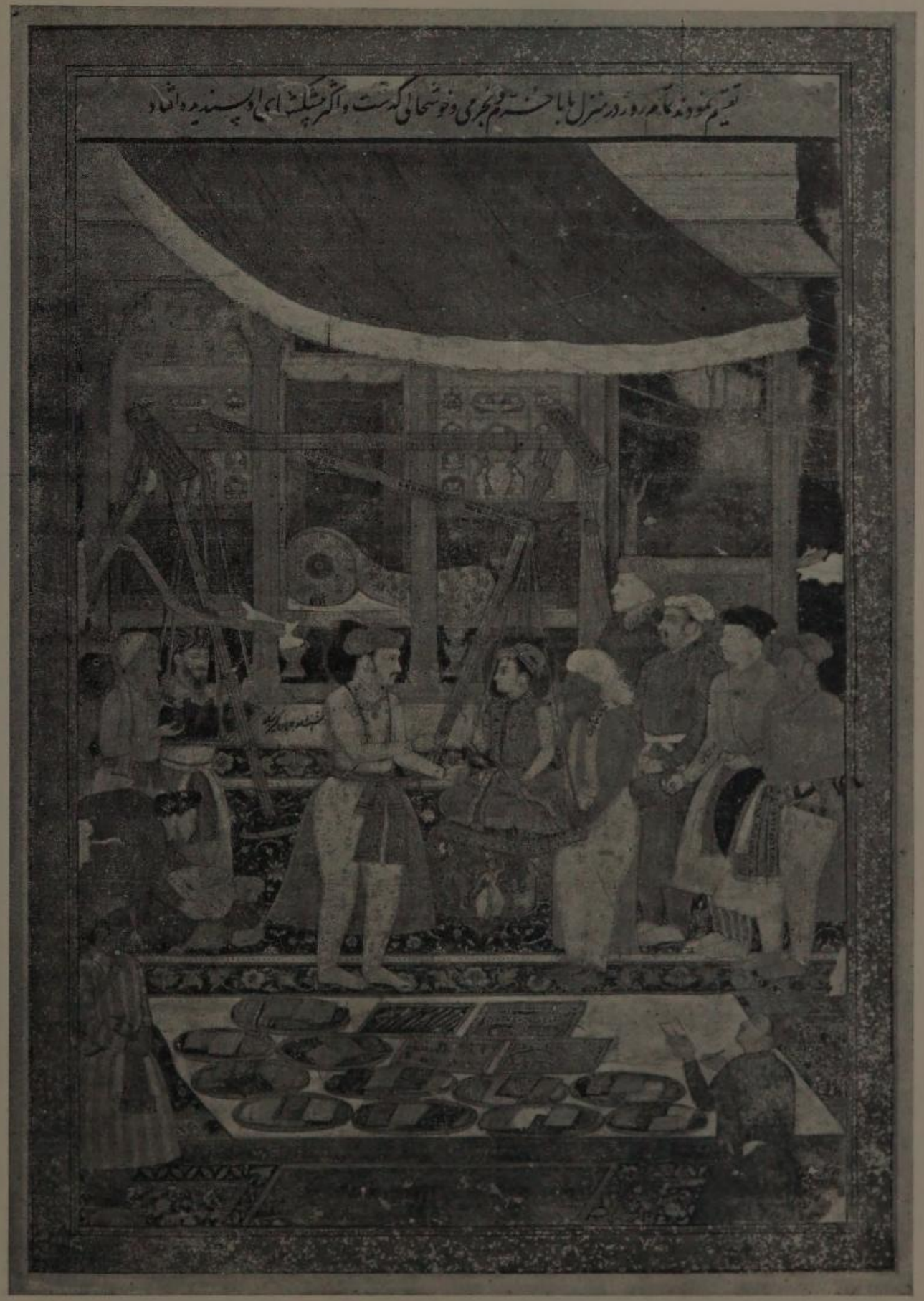
The exquisite painting of the *Turkey cock* by Mansur (the bird having been fetched for the Emperor from Goa) is a masterly rendering of a strange creature, valued for its novelty by the whole court. Mansur's kalam has been called naturalistic. Actually, this painter is not a portrait maker but an interpreter. The Turkey Cock has become, in his hands, almost a peacock by the exaggeration of the tail, the fine workmanship on the feathers and the heightening of the stance.

Another novelty brought to Agra was the striped Zebra. The Emperor Jehangir's childlike delight in the animal was obviously shared by Mansur, who has rendered the East African horse-donkey-mule with great verve in painting the lyrical stripes. This picture expresses Mansur's versatile talent and Jehangir's love for the bizarre.



Gay Jehangir with his wife. Early 17th century, Indian Museum, Calcutta

Jehangir with his wife is an intimate study of the life of the Zenana in the palace. It supplied the model for the free expression of the love life to the princes of India. The balcony and the garden are adapted from Rajasthani painting.



Weighing of Prince Khurram, with the fond father looking on. Early 17th century

Masterly portrait of a sick man, Inayat Khan, painted C. 1680 A.D., Bodlein Library Oxford

In the *Death of Inayat Khan*, a character portrait was achieved of a sick man. The elegant nobleman is shown ensconced among cowtail cushions, propped up in his last moments, as though for portrayal. It seems that Jehangir was fascinated by the phenomenon of the slow death of this luxury loving debauch. Could it be that he wished to have a warning for himself of the end of the life of pleasure? The draftsmanship is finely done and the transitional moment is well caught by some talented painter.

Shah Jahan

As prince Khurram, the Emperor Shah Jahan (1627-1657 A.D.), had shown interest in painting. Indeed, Sir Thomas Roe records a charming anecdote about him. The English Ambassador presented prince Khurram 'a silver watch, very small, which he took kindly, but told me the pictures I showed his father the night before, if I had given, would have been better accepted than anything, demanding if I had no more.'

But, as a favourite of Jehangir, he had been in charge of military campaigns in the Deccan, in Gujarat, in Afghanistan and in Mandu. And he acquired a taste for the beautiful buildings built under the Sultanates. So, when he became Emperor, he spent most of the state treasury on building the Red Fort in Delhi, the Jama Masjid, as well as the Taj Mahal in Agra and architecture began to achieve priority in his mind.

The paintings done under his patronage still retain their technical virtuosity, with a firm line in the drawing, rich colouring and tones, with an added love of splendour. But portraiture began to dominate. And, in the effort to create gorgeous durbar scenes, the inner vitality of the free art of his predecessors was somewhat lost in ornateness.

The painters continued the previous tradition of noblemen, preparing portfolios and parallel paintings for books. Later, in Shah Jahan's reign, the colours became mostly decorative. Gold was more frequently used for embellishment. And showiness replaced genuine feeling.

There are certain important paintings, however, of Shah Jahan's reign, which show that the ateliers were maintained and encouraged.

Exquisite Portrait of Shah Jahan in his 40th year, by Bichatar, C. 1630 A.D. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The dramatic scene, showing *Emperor Shah Jahan* in Court is a lively composition, full of drama, as is also highly sumptuous. There is a certain theatricality in the presentation of pomp and splendour.

Shah Jahan giving an audience in Red Fort, Delhi, with sumptuous colouring. C. 1660. A.D

The same may be said of the *Portrait of Dara Sikoh*, eldest son of Shah Jahan painted by Hunhar, 1690 A.D., is even more sensitive.

And there are some charming love scenes and feminine portraits, probably done under Dara Sikoh, though the pigments here have become more decorative and there is a lack of inspiration. The technique, as evidenced in the famous surviving album in the India Office Library, London, is sustained at a lower level of skill than in Jehangir's time. There is a variety of interests, but decorativeness is obvious.

Clever drawings of animals built on other animals, and acrobats, now began to be generally painted, and these trick paintings, were clear evidence of a fashionable patronage. The courtiers began to employ artists to portray their love life on moonlit terraces, where they enjoyed dalliances with their youngest wives or concubines. The life of personal pleasure began to be the cliche of Mughal painting.

Portrait of Dara Sikoh, eldest son of Shah Jahan showing him as a sensitive young man by Hunnar C. 1690 A.D

Aurangzeb

The next Emperor, Aurangzeb (1657-1706 A.D.) imprisoned his aged father. He drove out his eldest brother, Dara Sikoh, and two other brothers, away from the capital and destroyed them. And he began to show his ruthless hand in every direction.

The arts were ignored under this puritan fanatical monarch, though Manucci, the Italian traveller, tells us that the nobles did not cease to listen to songs in secret. Obviously, the courtiers commissioned portraits of themselves and their women, as also romantic night scenes. And, far from destroying creativeness, the repression intensified the clandestine practice of the arts, specially painting.

Later in his life, the Emperor somewhat relaxed the fanatical taboo. And there are some fairly interesting pictures of Aurangzeb during his various campaigns, as also of his bent old age. Perhaps, by the time he was over sixty he had relaxed his taboo against painting.

Siege of Golconda, with Aurangzeb shown as a conqueror in his advanced age. Grandiose battle picture without much vitality

18th Century

The skill of the painters was sustained under his descendants.

Under Muhammad Shah, who came to the throne after three of Aurangzeb's successors had been assassinated, there was a renewed interest in painting large-sized pictures, showing pleasure scenes.

But many of the painters had begun to emigrate to provincial courts, and the various offshoots of Mughal painting began to flourish; as, for instance, the Jaipur Kalam, the Oudh Kalam, the Deccani Kalam and the Pahari Kalam.

The disturbed conditions of the late 17th and early 18th centuries may have shaken the centre. But the creative life never stopped on the peripheries of the vast landscape. The deeper connection of the craftsmen, with the rural life, not only brought the exalted design of the Imperial court into the functional arts of the sub courts, but added ever new dimensions of vision and intensity. The improved pigments of the cities helped to emancipate the more skilful small town artisans.

The 18th century Mughal painting at the centres in Delhi and Agra achieved exquisite cylindrical forms, with discreet colouring. This situation was maintained till well into the 19th century, when it expired with the inrush of the European style bazar ivory miniature portraits and drawings of street scenes.

Woman with a wine cup, elegant Mughal beauty, 18th century A.D., Indian Museum, Calcutta

Zeenut Mahal, wife of Bahadur Shah Portrait on ivory, early 19th century A.D

14. Rajasthani Painting

The role of painting, or for that matter of any art, in a feudal Indian court, was not merely the result of the vanity of the Prince but it also supplied a vital need.

Situated in a fortress, for defence against enemies, the palace of the Raja was often cut off from the busy routine of the village or small town life. The royal family lived, except in times of war, to the slow, placid rhythm of a live-long day, which was part of the twelve changing seasons of the year. The Court musicians ushered the dawn to the tune of instrumental or classical vocal music. The prince awoke slowly, after the prolonged pleasures of the previous night, and attended to his ablutions in the medicated bath waters prepared for him. After this he settled down to prayers in the small family temple or mosque in the courtyard of the palace. Either the text of the holy book was recited to him by the priest or, as he himself remembered it by rote, he whispered it to his own ears. This Puja took him late into the morning, when further ablutions became necessary in the warm Indian climate. After he had dressed, he broke his night fast with a few tasty dishes and liquids according to the season. Then he gave a showing to the nobles and courtiers in the special audience hall of the palace, heard a few petitions or decided important matters, or relegated business to the chief minister and retired to the main morning meal. This was generally a ten to twelve dish affair, with copious use of condiments and clarified butter. After which it became necessary to enjoy a prolonged siesta, in the company of the favourite queen, fanned by female attendants. The notes of appropriate music again awakened the family in the afternoon. Another bath and he dressed for the relaxed evening. The prince then either rode out for an airing, or retired to the garden and talked to intimate friends, or saw the court painters, goldsmiths or, silversmiths, ivory workers, brocade and muslin weavers etc. The dusk music announced further prayers. The rich evening meal followed.

And then there was revellery, either by way of dance, or songs on the moonlit terrace, or a visit to the household of a concubine. The court painters were often in attendance, except in the most private moments.

This kind of routine led to the patronage of a host of craftsmen in every court. And, sometimes, distinguished artisans were bought off with handsome rewards of lands, robes of honour and stipends, from rival kingdoms. And competition among these artisans to produce works of quality was always intense.

Thus the tradition of painting which flourished in Rajasthani courts was part of the ritual of daily life. There are certain primitive but characteristically Rajasthani paintings of the early 16th century, simple, vital and of folk inspiration. The feudal princes were heroes of the people and retained their contacts with them. This art is of the earth celebrating its intensities in primitive techniques.

Scene from the Krishna Lila of Mewar, in the primitivist Hindu Vaishnava tradition, relatively unaffected by Mughal influence. National Museum of India, Early 18th century.

Mewar

The dynasty of Mewar claimed a proud lineage from the Sun and ruled first from Chawand, then from the fortress of Chitore, and later from the beautiful lake city of Udaipur.

One of the earliest of their line, Rana Kumbha (1435-1468 A.D.) was an accomplished musician.

Rana Sanga (1509-1528 A.D.) resisted Babur at Sikri. His daughter-in-law, Mira, was a poetess and devotee of the God Krishna, and her songs stirred northern India, until she became one of the symbols of the Hindu Vaishanava revival.

After prolonged resistance to the Mughals, Rana Amar Singh I (1628-1652 A.D.) befriended Shah Jehan and played host to the Emperor. Rana Raj Singh (1652-1680 A.D.), however, revolted against the fanatical Aurangzeb. This prince was a cultivated man and left a rich treasury, which his two next successors squandered freely.

Scene from Panchatantra, in the primitivist Hindu style, with Mewar warm colours. May owe something to similar Mughal treatment of animals. National Museum of India, Mid. 18th century A.D

As almost elsewhere in mediaeval India, so in Rajasthan, the current paintings were the conventional sharp featured Jain pictures.

Then were painted certain pictures under the influence of the Sultanate in the early 16th century. Thus the basic elements of the Rajasthani style, thick colours, intense line, emotional exuberance, were already there by the second quarter of the 16th century. The *Chaurapanchasika* pictures of the second half of the 16th century (N. C. Mehta collection) show refinement and improvement on the early style. These paintings may have influenced Mewar. At any rate, these pictures, and the mid-way between *Gita Govinda* (1590 A.D., P.O.W. Museum) show dominant love of nature, of lush trees, boughs, flowers, birds and animals, in the exquisite background of thick foliage where lovers play. Deep blue rolling clouds, with streaks of gold lightning, and streams with flowing lotuses, charge the atmosphere.

From then on till the end of the reign of Jagat Singh I in 1652 A.D., the Mewar style remains strongly primitivist, depending mostly on bright reds. The Muslim painter Shahab-Din was still working. In his mature period, he with many other painters helped to transform the near folk style gradually into a sophisticated art. Love scenes began to be rendered in a discreetly luxurious atmosphere.

In 1605 A.D. the Chawand set of musical modes was produced by a Muslim painter, Nasiruddin. In these the primitive colours, red, yellow, and black, predominate, as against the influence of the more finished Deccani pictures. The angular figures with fish eyes, however, seem to be reminiscent both of Jain pictures and of the *Nimat Namah* of Mandu. Nasir-ud-din's son, Shahab-Din, carried on his father's work between 1627 and 1648 A.D., adding hundreds of pictures to the repertory of the *Sringara Rasa*.

Many of the devotional books of the Hindus, including the *Gita-Govinda* of Jayadeva, *Bhagavata Purana* and *Raga Raginis* came to be illustrated. These constitute the main content of 17th century Mewar painting. A typical mature painting of Mewar is the *Ragini Vasanta* 1650 A.D. The vivid lacquer red background presents the blue bodied Krishna in dancing pose, even as he plays on the flute, while two Gopis play the drum and cymbals respectively and one girl shoots colour. The peacocks and the birds are excited by the magic flute. The trees and foliage awaken from their brooding calm and come alive with the shooting foliage and yellow and red fruit. The earth throbs. The sky is shot through with a white tremor under the blue empyrean. The composition creates the drama of the music of bursting life in the spring. All the elements of Chawand are now intensified with great skill.

The rich contrasting early colours of Mewar, crimson, vermilion, yellow, black, white and blue remain. The themes are mostly from Hindu religious poetry.

Ragini Vasanta, symbolising love, rendered in Mewar hot colours, with definite Mughal influence, specially in Krishna's costume. National Museum of India, C. 1650 A.D

Later, the general finish of the Mughal paintings came into play. This can be seen in *Giri Govardhan* (1680-1700 A.D.) The costumes of the male figures changed from the four pointed Jamah to the round skirt Jamah. The Akbar style turban was introduced in the place of the loose bound headgear. Shading under the armpits was taken up. The women were given flowered or plain skirts and transparent veils. The composition is more intricate, combining the wall painting effect with the miniature frame.

Later still, Mughal style portraits were attempted. Night scenes were painted, redolent of the moon and the stars. Trees, plants, birds, animals and rocks become more variegated and were stylised beyond the merely decorative Mughal landscapes. They become symbols of moods. Thus, the main emphasis was on the dominant mood, or the emotion of the scene, as in early Mewar. The colours still glowed. But they were now softer and used to heighten clarity of the drawing. The whole atmosphere became refined.

Maharaja Amar Singh II (1698-1710 A.D.) who accepted Mughal suzerainty. Portrait done in the traditional manner. Late 16th century A.D., National Museum of India, New Delhi

Bundi

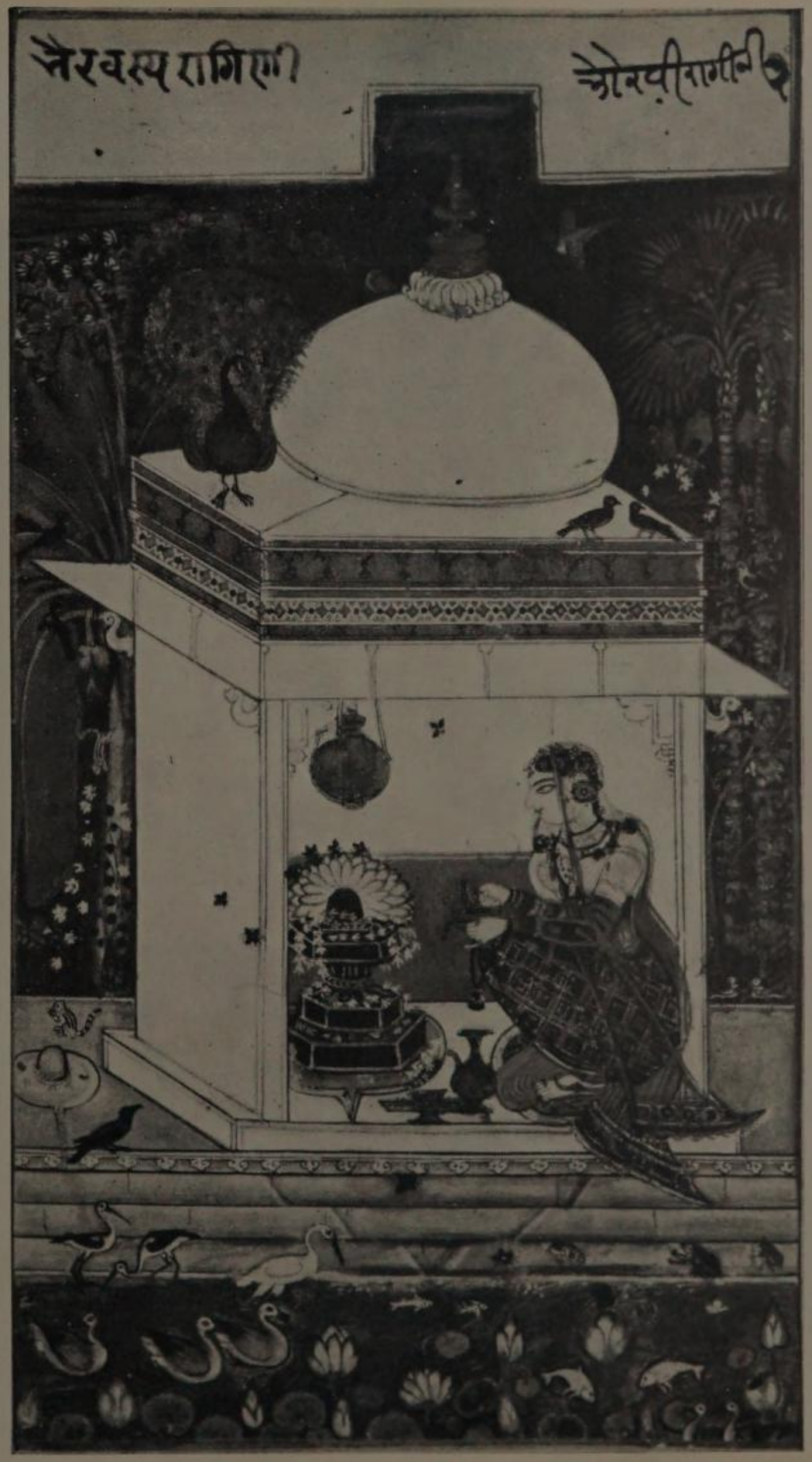
In the midst of thick forests and hills, Bundi was a small kingdom, divided from the sister Kotah State by the River Chambal, with Mewar on its west and Jaipur and Tonk to the north.

After the fall of the stronghold of Ranthambor to Akbar in 1561 A.D., Rao Surjan, who was a vassal of Mewar, accepted the sovereignty of the Mughals. The Emperor Jehangir conferred various titles on Surjan's grandson, Rao Ratan Singh and Mughal influence became dominant, also bringing Bundi into touch with the Deccan through princes who went to fight there for the Imperialists. Rao Satrusal (1631-1658 A.D.) is known to have employed many painters. Satrusal's son and grandson fought along with the Imperial forces in the Deccan.

Buddha Singh (1695-1731 A.D.), cousin of Bhim Singh of Kotah (1705-1720 A.D.), captured Bundi.

But Buddha Singh's son, Umed Singh, returned to Bundi in 1748 A.D. with the help of the Marathas.

Of the earliest Bundi paintings *Ragini Bhairavi* (1625 A.D.) from the Municipal Museum, Allahabad, is typical. Three different styles are sought to be fused here. The bold near folk treatment and colours are reminiscent of Mewar, as also the rounded jaw of the figures. The exuberant tree and flowers, birds and fishes are absorbed from the local Bundi landscape. These may have been the influence of the Mandu *Nimat Namah*, specially in the pond below the picture, with ducks, fishes and lotuses moving in the water. The Mewar eyes and primitivism has also affected this painting, but the features are more rounded, less tense and the composition is coherent.



Ragini Bhairavi: in primitivist traditional style, possibly influenced by Mandu, in the lotuses and ducks in the pond below. Municipal Museum, Allahabad U.P. 1625 A.D

Similar features appear in the *Raga Dipika* in the Bharat Kala Bhavan set of *Ragmala* pictures, except that the Mughal style costume is more prominent here. Later come the less primitivist *Ragmala* drawings from Bundi in the National Museum of about 1640 A.D. During the period between 1625-1640 A.D., then, Bundi work is almost parallel to, or influenced by, Mewar primitivism. The five paintings of the late 17th century reproduced first by Karl Khandalavala and Promod Chandra, show that the Mewar base has been improved upon by a genuine Bundi manner. The trees, flowers, waters are not used merely as background, but have been knit into romantic mood in the paintings, mainly devoted to the tender graces of women. The kinship with Mewar figures still remains, but while the Mewar body is flat, in Bundi a rounded face appears as a convention. The colours are richer in comparison with the Mughal style. In *Lovers pointing to the Crescent Moon,* Prince of Wales Museum (1659 A.D.) there is a lush vegetation, typical of Bundi forests, refined by the Deccani influence. The lovers exude the pleasure of togetherness. Later, *Ladies in a Pleasure Garden* (Prince of Wales Museum late 17th century A.D.) is painted with the highest skill. The grouping of the female figures in the midst of a refined garden, full of cypresses and brooding Indian trees, with fountains playing on all four corners of the square, reveal superb craftsmanship, which fuses the local base with Deccani and Agra workmanship.

Courtesan with attendant in the garden. Late quarter of the 17th century A.D. Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. Cylindrical women in lush garden, redolent of the colours of Mewar, but obviously affected by the Mughal kalam in the composition of Cyprus trees and flowing water rivulets and fountain

In *Lady Surrounded by animals at a Forest Tryst*. Illustration to *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das, there is a superb manifestation of the fusion of human mood with trees, birds, and flowers. The central female figure becomes the idol of love, waiting to be worshipped. All the pairs in nature suggest her longing for the lover.

Vasukasajja Nayika, a charming miniature reflecting the lush beauty of Bundi forests, but tempered by the Mughal manner in design and composition—Illustration to Rasikapriya of Keshav Das, (National Museum of India, 17th century A.D.

In the first part of the 18th century A.D., the Bundi Kalam matured both in quality and quantity. The treatment of nature, though still rich, was more sophisticated. Softer colours were preferred for the figures. The drawing became surer and more mobile, as in *The Summer Elephant*. And the mood integrated itself into expression, with care. The charming Bundi pictures of this time can be easily distinguished, with their abundant nature and the joy of life of men and women sporting in an earthly paradise. Love, in one form or another, is the dominating theme here. The flowering trees, the lotuses, the pairs of birds, are all used to emphasise, by repetition, through symbols, the bursting youth of the lovers, and their ardent desire to love and be loved. At the end of the 18th century the impact of the west led to mixed metaphors here as elsewhere in India.

The summer elephant symbolises the madness that comes from 'summer heat, which is like a drunken elephant storming in.' Vital draftsmanship in vivid composition with bright colours. Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay C. 1750 A.D.

Kotah

There were some forms of the primitive Kalam, in the state of Kotah, near Bundi, under Raja Ram Singh (1686-1708 A.D.) and Raja Arjun Singh (1720-1724 A.D.).

Lady drawing portrait of her Lover c. 1720 (Municipal Museum, Allahabad), shows fish-eyed women tensely involved in the drama of love. The architecture is near Chawand style and the mood is suggested by the animation of trees and sky.

But the Kotah style matured suddenly under Raja Umed Singh (1771-1820 A.D.). Perhaps the contacts with the Deccan of the Rajas of the early 17th century had prepared the ground-work on the basis of the wall paintings current in both Bundi and Kotah. Under Umed Singh, painting obviously became an important activity. This prince seems to have been interested in hunting from the early age of ten, when he came to the Gaddi. Colonel Tod described him as the best horseman and marksman in the country, in his famous book *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. And we find some of the liveliest hunt pictures in Indian Art painted in Umed Singh's time.

The hunting scene showing *Umed Singh shooting Tigers with a bow* is technically a highly accomplished painting. The hills, trees, human beings and animals are all simplified, with a rare skill, into near abstract designs. And yet the vital movement of the tiger, face to face with the single barrelled gun in the hands of a courtier is realistically interpreted. The grouping of the hosts of Shikaris and the abundant flora and fauna is done by a painter with exuberant energy for brushwork. In seizing upon the primitive abstraction of folk art, these Kotah paintings of the 18th century anticipate by a century the work of the modern naive French painter, Douanier Rousseau.

Later Kotah pictures, under Raja Ram Singh (1828-1866 A.D.) maintain the tradition of the hunting scene, as well as the brightly coloured court scenes, plastered onto the walls of the palaces. And their charm lies in the absorption of foreign elements within the framework of the simplified Kotah style. The verve and resilient energy of stallions fighting may owe something to the Mughal and even European influences.

Under Raja Chattar Singh (1866-1889 A.D.), the brushwork is loud and garish. But, curiously, the bazar pictures of Kotah at the end of the 19th century retain some of the vitality of Raja Umed Singh's time.

Lady drawing her lover's portrait: Dhanasri Ragini, musical mode, Kotah C. 1720 Municipal Museum, Allahabad, primitivist echo of the shared Mewar tradition

Raja Umed Singh of Kotah (1771-1820) shooting tigers C. 1800 A.D., Gayer Anderson collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, primitivist vital figuration of forest scene reminiscent of the Douanier Rousseau naive style a century later

Bikaner

The earliest pictures in Bikaner are primitivist illustrations to Kalidasa's *Megh Doot*.

Later, the influence of the Mughal style under Jehangir seems to have been felt. Also many paintings were imported by the princes from Amber, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Agra and the Deccan, wherever they went for pleasure, or on duty, with the Imperial Mughal army.

Like their contemporaries, they preferred the *Bhagavad Purana*, *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das and the *Raga-Ragini* pictures. The page of double Illustration to the *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das, dated (not long after 1600 A.D.) by Mr. Basil Gray, is a significant synthesis of Bikaner craftsmanship with the Mughal manner. The clear view of the figures and the house, under the half moon and the stars, shows the principle of contrasting vision practised by the Indian believers in imaginative art. The strong reds and blues and greens are, as in Mewar, primitivist. The tufts of grass are from Mughal miniatures. The dominant love mood is expressionist.

Double illustration to the Rasikapriya of Keshav Das: Above Radha sending a message to her lover Krishna. Below Krishna kneeling at her feet: The moonlight is supposed to give visibility: Picture marked by clarity, expressive gestures and emphatic colouring, sobered by Mughal influence

The portrait of *Raja Bhoj Rathor* by Nur Muhammad, dated 1606 A.D., seems to have been done in the Deccan, or in the Deccani style, with due adaptation to Rajasthani patronage. The red costume against the darkish background is contrasted against the soft palette of the Deccan. The architecture follows the current Mughal fashion.

Some Muslim painters, however, settled in Bikaner in the latter half of the 17th century A.D. One of these, Rukn-ul-Din painted a portrait of *Maharaja Anup Singh* (about 1690 A.D.) seated on a horse. This is almost in the Mughal manner, except that the Rajput prince sits more proudly on the powerful prancing horse than do the Muslim noblemen or courtiers. But, apart from the pompous Rajasthani manner of the rider and the horse, the delicate greens of the earth and the sky greys, as well as the white topped palaces, are derived from the Mughal Kalam. Instead of the angels and the cherubs in the sky, which the masters in Agra and Delhi had taken into their pictures from European painters, Rukn-ul-Din shows parts of Maharaja Anup Singh's army in the clouds. Rukn-ul-Din was undoubtedly a highly talented painter, sensitive, urbane and sophisticated.

Another important equestrian painting of Bikaner is that of *Raja Kesari Singh* by Ustad Muhammad Rafique, done about 1700 A.D. We do not know if this painter was from Agra or Delhi or a local artist. Certainly, he does not seem to accept the Mughal Kalam, except for the heroic pose of the prince on his horse. Muhammad Rafique even rejects the nearly static convention used by Rukn-ul-Din in the *Portrait of Anup Singh*.

Raja Bhoj Rathor by Nur Muhammad, a fine portrait study in the Bikaner warm colours, perhaps influenced by Deccani portraits in the costume. Dated 1606 A.D

Portrait of Maharaja Anup Singh (1690-1695) A.D., by Rukn-ul-Din done about 1690 A.D. A fine equestrian study of this Rajput prince, who fought for the Mughals in the Deccan: The treatment of clouds and the fantasy of elephant and horses in the cloud, owes itself to the Mughal conventions already established under Shah Jahan

He emphasises the piercing of the lion's neck by the prince with the lance, thus absorbing the background of soft pink hills, clumps of grass and shrubs into the area of heroic action. In fact, the landscape is interpreted, with the pouring rain, in the Hindu, rather than the Mughal manner, obedient to the human will, and as to an outside element. The nervous, taut line of the drawing of the dramatic animal body is almost like an ancient Assyrian relief.

During the 18th century the Bikaner Kalam was strongly influenced by the pomposity of the Jodhpur school, with its emphasis on grandiose portraits of the princes. And, after the incoming of British influence, the native tradition decayed into near photography.

Kalyani Ragini Painted at Pali in 1623 by artist Virji, with primitivist handling of the scene, later treated in Dhola Maru with more sophistication. Presence of lota shows Mughal influence,

Jodhpur

There is no clear evidence about the earliest paintings produced in Jodhpur. The Jain style must have flourished here, because of the nearness of Gujarat and Western Rajasthan. At least from the wall paintings in the fort of nearby Nagaur and bits of Jodhpur primitives, which have come to light, we see a frank, open expressionism in the human figure, with fish eyes and taut faces amid stylised rounded trees.

The *Dhola Maru*, done under Raja Sur Singh (1595-1620 A.D.), already shows the Jehangir style turban on the head of the warrior Dhola Rai, though the compartments in the picture are still the 'flashbacks' of the local primitive story pictures.

Portrait of Raja Sur Singh of Jodhpur 1595-1620 A.D., in the Mughal manner, with clear profile etched in costume and soft colours

Romantic love scenes from Dhola Maru, compartmentalised in strips according to transitional division of space, in passionate colours.

King Bali and Vishnu in his vamana incarnation still retains the primitivism of Marwar, relatively unaffected by the Mughal influences, which had begun to exert themselves on the Rajput courts.

The love scene from the Dhola Maru romance in Jodhpur Palace collection, is typical of the sophistication which entered Rajasthani courts through the intimate scenes of the Mughal emperors already achieved in Agra. Only the Hindu renderings are more passionate.

King Bali and Vishnu in his Vaman incarnation, in the traditional style of Marwar, unaffected by Mughal influence, early 17th century A.D

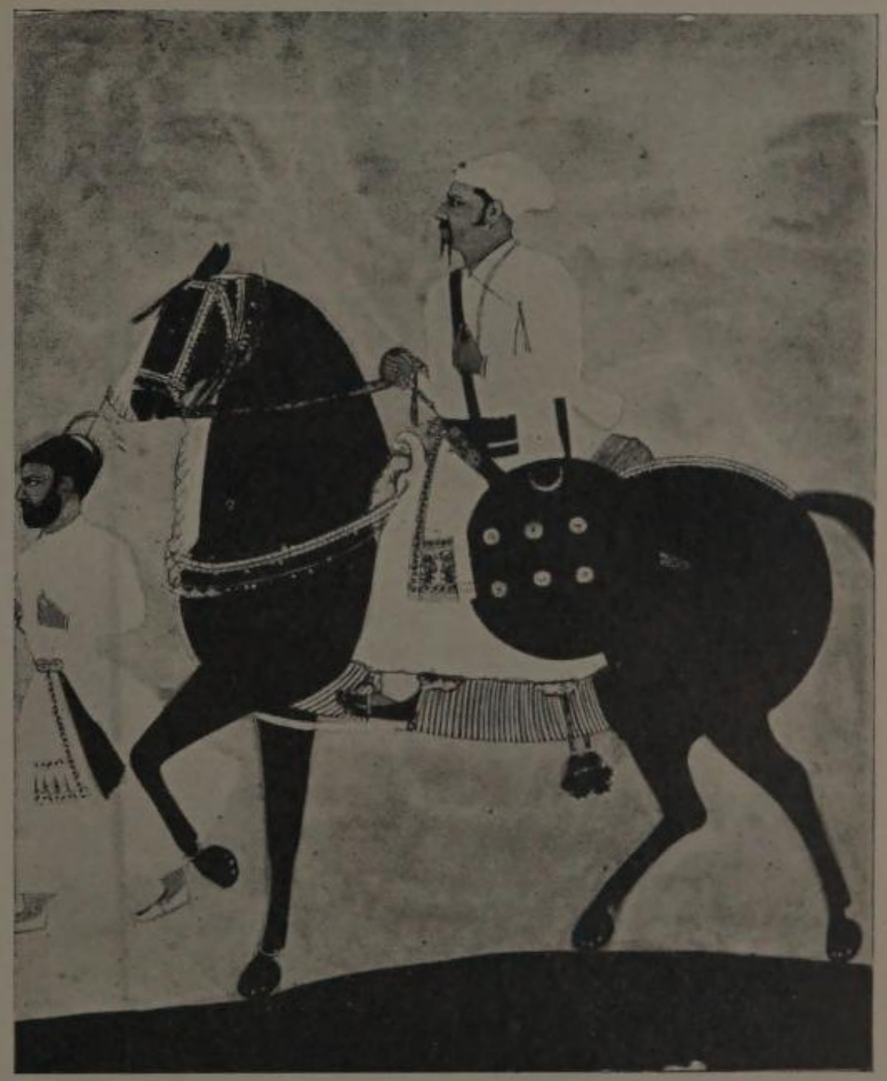
Popular Mughal

Vilaval Ragini Jodhpur, C. 1610-20 A.D. in the continuous Hindu tradition with syphons and alcoves showing Mughal influence.

This indigenous style seems to have continued at the same time as the Mughal influence was being accepted, as in the *Vilaval Ragini* (1610-1620 A.D.) and *Song of Surdas* of the middle of the 17th century.

After 1726 A.D. the Mughalisation of architecture and painting proceeded apace. For instance. the *Portrait of Raja Sonag Champwat on a horse*, done in 1700 A.D., is clearly in the dominant Mughal brushwork. The vigorous sweeping curves

Song of Surdas: Illustration mid 17th century A.D., with ambitious rendering of the drama, in a sophisticated rectangular Mughal style composition.



Equestrian portrait of Raja Sonag Singh of Champavat in Mughal style painted in 1700 A.D

of the horse and the Raja's stance reflect the heroism preferred by the Rajputs. Also, the faces of the large sized prince with his enormous turban, his walrus moustachios and mutton chop whiskers, with the dwarfish retinue, show the exaggerated pomp and splendour of the feudal court. The resemblance between the charger of Maharaja Anup Singh of Bikaner with the horse under Raja Sonag suggests some cross-fertilisation of technique between the two kingdoms. But most of the other Jodhpur pictures derive from the independent connections of this western Rajasthan state with the Mughal dynasty, though, throughout the 18th century, the tradition here remained more extroyert, emphasising the personal sense of glory of the princes.

Portrait of Maharaja Jaswant Singh (1638-1708 A.D.), about 1640 A.D. Imperial Court costume and polished manner of Mughalised architecture

The study of a *Royal lady* with the dishevelled hair, in obvious distress, is a romantic painting of a night scene in the Jodhpur court. The Jodhpur kalam has imbibed refinement from Mughal drawing but retained the primitivist density of colour effects. This is a charming painting verging onto the pretty-pretty pictures, which were to follow in most Rajasthani courts.

Royal Concubine in distress, in the Mughalised manner—middle 18th century A.D

Kishangarh

The family and social affiliations of the Kishangarh princely house were with Jodhpur, of which, in fact, they were an offshoot. But the political connections with the Mughal court had also been intimate from the 17th century onwards. Although, however, the Mughal secular influence affected this court, the deep Hindu Vaishanava devotionalism seems to have survived, and created an art more lyrical than that of any other Rajasthani school.

Maharaja Sawant Singh (1748-1775 A.D.), alias Nagari Das, was overcome by a sudden obsession for the love-god Krishna. He preferred the *Pushti Marga* or the way of pleasure approach towards the divine cowherd, which had been taught by the sage Vallabha in the 15th century A.D. And with Bani Thani, a lovely maid of honour of his mother's palace, he devoted himself to prayer, poetry and painting. Fortunately for him, his consort was also a poetess and a singer. And he found in a painter called Nihal Chand, the genius who could appease his passion for the mystic love for which he ultimately renounced the throne, when he retired to perform Kirtans in Brindaban on the river Jumna near Mathura.

During the active years of Maharaja Sawant Singh's reign, the gifted Nihal Chand celebrated the loves of Krishna and Radha in a uniquely original style for his patron. The chief models for these pictures were probably Maharaja Sawant Singh and his beloved Bani Thani. But, ofcourse, this new style is an idealisation of the spiritual tradition of Rajasthan. The Kishangarh *Radha*, with her elegant costume, her sharp nose, almond eyes and arched mouth, brought a new kind of charm into late mediaeval painting. The brushwork of Nihal Chand tends to be slightly decorative. But the pellucid colouring, the firm drawing and the marvellous groupings which this painter achieved, lift Rajasthani painting from the princely vainglory of the middle of 18th century to an ecstatic art of the most sensitive kind. The intensity of Hindu devotional feelings was combined with a rare delicacy of handling space and colour relationships. The spell of Nihal Chand continued in Kishangarh till the early 19th century.

Stylised portrait of Bani Thani, the consort of Maharaja Sawant Singh, immortalised by the painter, Nihal Chand, in one of the finest portraits in Indian Art. Comparison with the actual portrait in the Kishangarh collection shows amount of stylisation here. Portrait painted in 1757 A.D

The *Krishna lila*, which was the favourite sport of Maharaja Sawant Singh, is enacted by the painter, Nihal Chand, in a highly original composition. Vivaciously rich in colouring of trees and flowers and water, it emphasises the drama of each gopini trying to claim Krishna for herself.

Krishna dallying with Radha and the gopis, delineated by Nihal Chand in an exquisite landscape showing each gopi claiming Krishna for herself. The sharp-nosed elegant women with diaphonous veils owe themselves to the Mughal influence, while the emotionalism of the picture is dominantly Hindu. Late 18th century A.D

This fine picture of Deepavali is an adumbration of Nihal Chand's genius in black and gold, with the exquisite workmanship. The abstraction of detail is unique. Late 18th century A.D

Jaipur

The Kachhawaha princes of Amber (later of Jaipur) had been in intimate touch with the Imperial Mughal capital after Akbar married a princess of this house.

The brother of this queen, Jodhabai, was Raja Man Singh, a favourite General of the Emperor. And like Akbar he patronised painters. So the Akbaraid style pictures began to be seen in Amber. Consequently, the Amber palace decorations, though Hindu in theme, and in continuation of the wall paintings of the garden house in Bairat, owe a good deal to the technique of the Mughal miniatures. On the other hand, the Hindu elements in the style evolved under Akbar in Fatehpur Sikri, Agra and Sikandra, were mostly imported from Amber. Apart from the shared books illustrated at the Imperial capital, like the Persianised miniatures in the Persian translation of the epic *Mahabharata*, called the *Razm Namah*, the Amber dynasty patronised the *Bhagavata Purana*, the *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das and certain *Ragamalas*, in the more emotional Rajasthani style. The continuance of these two opposite tendencies is not extraordinary. The native princes assumed the fashions of the Imperial court, when they resided at the centre. On the other hand, they still employed local painters at home; and these artisans stuck to stereotypes. In between, the two styles intermixed. Thus from the primitivism of the *Rasikapriya* pictures of 1600 and 1625 A.D., to the refinement of the portraits of 17th century, there is a clear advance: The drawing is more sensitive, the colours and line are mellower and the whole outlook is refined.

Illustration to the Rasikapriya of Keshav Das, C. 1600 A.D., shows the incursions of the Mughal scene manner, specially of the folding of curtains, though the colours are still indigenous

Portrait of Sawai Madho Singh and his queen, C. 1751-52 A.D., in the traditional manner, with the flower in the prince's hand as a stylisation borrowed from the Mughals

Portrait of Sawai Madho Singh, done in C. 1765 A.D., in the Mughal style

Portrait of Pratap Singh

After this, at the end of the 17th and early 18th centuries, though the revival of the Krishna cult led to increasingly introvert themes, the Mughal profile was retained, and the fine Persianised line was never given up.

Sawai Madho Singh, with his Rani, shows the occasional reversion of Jaipur court to primitivist leanings and its integral traditions, inspite of the 16th century Mughal influence.

The later portrait of the same Sawai Madho Singh shows stylisation in the Mughal manner, but still retaining reflexes of the Kachhawa tradition.

Lesbians in the Zenana, Jaipur 19th century. The eroticism of the Mughal court was making itself felt in the provinces

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries under Swai Jai Singh, the builder of Jaipur, the traditional bright Hindu pigments came back. The old curvacious line of the Indian wall paintings took over, in large cartoon drawings of princes, as well as in the delineation of the sports of Krishna with the maids. Those later pictures seem superior to anything done, under Kachhawaha patronage, in alliance with early Mughal art. Perhaps, the feeling for wall paintings gave a more heroic character to this art.

The old sensuous charm of the almond eyes, the thick lips and the curvacious line is exploited to the full in the murals of Krishna with the Gopis in city palace Jaipur. The decorative serpentine locks are used for lyrical effect. The jewellery is painted almost in relief, to give movement to the static pose, even as the three-fourth view of the body makes the portrait highly expressive.

The late 19th century painting in Jaipur is over ambitious and pompous and decadent. The European photograph was to take over.

This part of a wall painting in the City Palace, Jaipur, is a heightening of the Mughal manner, but with larger contours, into Rajasthani style. Strange that the original wall paintings of Rajasthan, which were to give so much to the making of the Mughal style at Agra, came back to Rajasthani walls enriched with clear finish, elegance and the softer colours of the Imperial court. The intensity of emotion of the musicians is still dominantly Hindu.

The *Goddess Saraswati* painted in the time of Sawai Ram Singh C. 1850 A.D., renders the Hindu goddess in the Mughal manner seated on a European chair.

The late 19th century paintings in Jaipur were to extend the Europeanisation, until the photographic treatment took over.

◀ *Saraswati painted at the time of Sawai Ram Singh, C. 1850 A.D., shows that the parallel orthodox tradition adapted to Mughal style was still continuous*

Chorus of singers in Mughal style, in large scale drawing in City Palace, Jaipur, shows transformation of original Rajasthani wall paintings via the Mughal court, into the Jaipur style. The treatment of faces and costumes is vibrant and individualised

15. Pahari Painting

As in other parts of India, so in the Punjab Himalayas, the ancient tradition of painting seems to have survived in the mediaeval period in vigorous folk styles. But there is no precise evidence available beyond the wall paintings in village houses, the gaily coloured furniture and the sharp ritual images. Only, as the whole mountain area was away from the main road of invasion and somewhat difficult of approach, some of the art forms remained intact, until, strong outside influences were received in the late mediaeval period. And, of course, there was always much coming and going among the various little kingdoms, which flourished in this area in all periods. So that the artist and art works were exchanged, though no one knows exactly how and to what extent.

The existence of important paintings in the Punjab Himalayas was only brought to light by the pioneer critic, Ananda Coomaraswamy, in his famous book, *Rajput Painting*, in the early years of our century. Since then, much work has been done to find out the dates, origins and styles of the many paintings that have become available. But though the general outline is fairly well known by now, there is still much argument about dates, provenance and styles. The whole situation is confused by the fact that all kinds of pictures turn up, in every state, and we do not often know whether they were painted by local artists, or were imported as gifts, or whether artists from one state travelled to another. And there are only a very few link-pictures available.

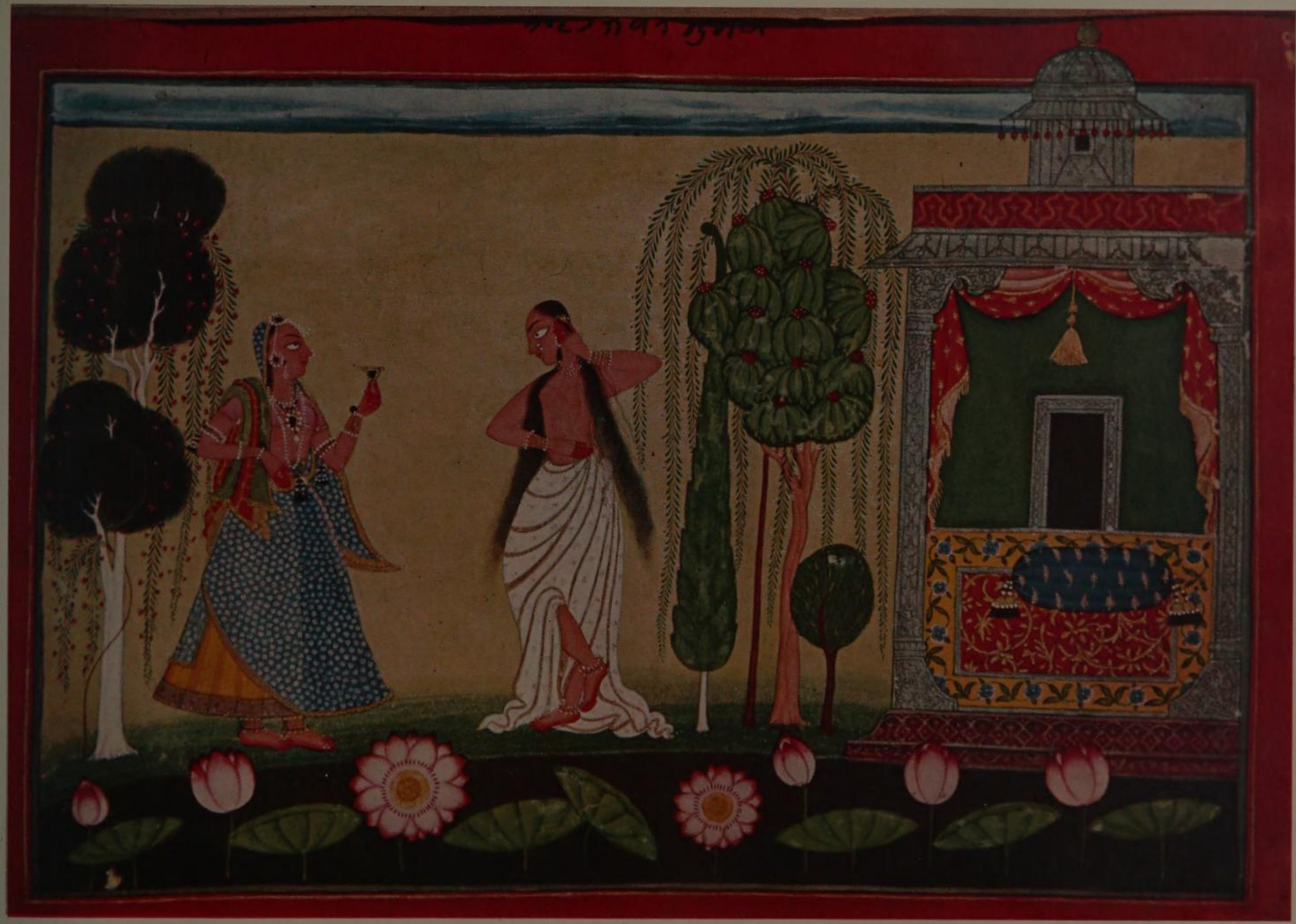
All the same, we have a fair amount of authentic material from kingdoms like Basohli, Guler, Kangra, Chamba, Jammu, Nurpur, Bilaspur, Mandi, Suket, Arki, Tehri-Garhwal, etc., and the term 'Pahari Painting' has been suggested to cover the work in all these states, because it expresses the common spirit which informed the schools.

After the first phase of the Mughal impact on the folk base of Basohli, there is more intensive influence from the Agra court of Jehangir and even Shah Jehan. Under the terror of Aurangzeb, quite a few artists of the Mughal court were fleeing to safer areas and some may have wandered into the Pahari area.

The fusion of the Basohli style with the Mughal Kalam was, however, not easy. Actually, we see two nearly parallel movements: one of these continues in Basohli and other little states like Bilaspur, Mandi and Chamba. The second, emanating from Guler, went to Jammu, Kangra and Chamba. The first strain retains the folk vigour, absorbing minor refinements. The second strain masters the Mughal line, and uses it in a sophisticated drawing to lyrical effect. Ultimately, the Mughal influence led to an art of glory in Sansar Chand's court, which made painting more and more decorative, insincere and conventional, offering Durbar scenes galore. Of course, there were the throwbacks to masterly paintings on the *Krishna-Radha*, *Nayaka-Nayika Bheda* and *Baramasa* themes, remnants of which have turned up in Garhwal.

Thus we must try to see each painting for itself and separate the vitalist pictures from the stereotyped traditional outpourings. Also, we must see where the graces of the Mughal techniques have been absorbed and led to individualist reinterpretation by the Hindu painters, so as to achieve refined art works, original in their inspiration, but fusing the indigenous outlook with the Agra, Delhi and Lahore sophistication. And we must separate such paintings, lumped by indiscriminating critics all together as 'lovely lovely', from the grandiose imitationist Durbar scenes, the mechanically contrived pretty pictures, from those which are charged with the passions of ardent love, that occupied the women behind the facade of the court etiquette and social prudery.

Pahari paintings, at their best, are redolent of private human feelings, of the subtlest anguish of separation and union in love, and highly sensuous in their expressionism—altogether more sincere where they reveal the aspirations of human beings in the gay daily life in the home. And, technically, there is an adumbration, in the finest pictures, of a near abstract technique, fused with personal features, in subtle compositions, which penetrate beneath the skin of the onlooker.



Bhanudatta author of Rasamanjari, defines the Mughada Heroine as 'youthful and inexperienced'. Here Mugadha is shown as one to whom 'youth has come unknown'. Big eyed innocence verging onto adolescent coyness, represents one of the finest paintings in the Rasamanjari series, Basohli, C. 1695 A.D., Dogra Art Gallery, Jammu

Raja Bhupat Pal of Basohli lived at Agra as a captive of Jehangir for twelve years. Doubtless he brought the fashions of the central court to his kingdom. The earliest known Pahari Paintings are from the time of Raja Kirpal Pal (c. 1678-1693 A.D.). They are in a manuscript called, *Rasamanjari*, which was illustrated under the patronage of this hill Raja.

Red hot vermillions, browns, blues, yellows and greens burst from these pictures. The profiles of the figures are fierce, with sharp noses and big fish eyes. The heavy jewellery is painted in small blobs of white, and superimposed in relief. The squares and cubes of architecture are emphasised. The treatment of nature is simplified, but often plain backgrounds are referred to, intensifying the outlook of the figures. The pictures are contained in rectangular red or black borders, after the style of the Mughal miniatures. The influence of Jehangir's painters is evident in certain other overall effects.

These paintings seem to suggest some affinities with local folk styles, which may have flourished on the basis of the Jain western-Indian palm leaf and paper manuscripts, as also with the mediaeval Kashmir style and the wall paintings of Western Tibet in Tsparang. Lama Taranath, we may remember, had written in 1608 A.D., that in Kashmir too there were, in former times, followers of the old Western school. And there were ancient trade connections with Western Tibet which certainly affected the architecture of the Pahari areas bordering on the mysterious Lama-land.

On the other hand, the brilliant colours, the savage profiles, the great intense eyes and the passionate red backgrounds, seem to have connections with Mewar paintings of 1650-1660 A.D. And it is suggested that there was some connection between the Basohli and Mewar courts. The same abstraction of architectural space, the same contrasts of colours and line, and the same preference for bare landscape without dense foliage is noticeable.

But we do know that, already in 1590 A.D., Zain Khan Koka had subdued the hill states of the Punjab, on behalf of Akbar, and that the Basohli rulers began to visit the Imperial capital. Obviously, the Imperial style pictures were seen by the Rajas. And, on their return home, they asked the local painters to emulate the example of the painters at the central court, as was the practice among feudatory princes. As the provincial artisans were mostly used to wall painting in the age-old Indian tradition, the figures in paintings of Basohli often break out of their Mughal rectangular frames, as in frescoes, and transform the miniatures. Thus in the place of the Mughal principle of decorative isolation of the theme in the rectangular frame work, we get the Hindu space-time sense which is endless. The painter isolates a theme and treats it symbolically. Thus, the cow may be cut in half, or a quarter figure may disappear, and show colours as energies.

The themes chosen in Basohli were from the religious books *Rasamanjari*, *Gita Govinda*, *Bhagavat Purana* and the *Ragamalas*, which were popular, in view of the Vaishnava Hindu revival in northern India.

The art of painting began to be used in Basohli for confrontation of human destiny. For instance, in the *Birth of Evil* from the *Bhagavad Purana* (1730-90 A.D.), we have the Jinns, Bhuts and Rakshasas of Hindu folk mythology, conjured up from the dark spaces of hell. The fantastic animal-human faces of the demons, with protruding teeth, sharp toes and distended eyes, emerge from the spiralling clouds of doom, in a free composition barely controlled by the rectangular frame.

The vitality of the folk base comes through in a later Basohli-Kangra picture of leaping fire, in which the elemental force, is rationalised in the more formal structure of the miniature.

The Basohli style is, therefore, clearly, the result of the impact of the Mughal miniature technique on the indigenous base of the western Punjab hills. The primitivism of the folk pictures is controlled. But the bright colours, with vital moving figures, clad in rich costumes and jewellery, with transparent headcloths, show the emergence of an authentic, passionate style.

In the 18th century the colours became softer. The tradition of Basohli weakened through the rise of nearby Kalams. The decorative manner set in, through a false sophistication.

The house of the Pandavas set on fire. Painted in Basohli

One of the key pictures of Pahari painting shows Raja Balwant Singh with a party of musicians. The fine brushwork of Nainsukh, son of Pandit Seu of Guler, brings the fine Mughal line and sophistication into the primitivist Pahari area. Lahore Museum, Pakistan, about 1740 A.D

Jammu

In 1739 A.D., the Persian King, Nadir Shah, invaded India, raided Delhi and spread panic and confusion in the northern plains. Therefore, the safer trade routes of the Punjab Himalayas flourished. The contacts between Basohli, Jasrota and Jammu, which are very near each other, were always intimate. In fact, the Jammu dynasty, which had ruled over a fairly big area since 1600 A.D., was later to extend its influence on the lower Punjab Hills, including Basohli, Mankot and Jasrota towards the east. Jammu may thus have absorbed the various vitalities of the village kingdom cultures, which were nearer the folk in their inspiration and modes of life.

Under Raja Balwant Singh, a junior prince of the Jammu dynasty, certain pictures were painted from 1748 A.D. onwards, which show certain affinities with the fine craftsmanship and soft colours of Guler. Balwant Singh was a vanglorious man of many talents who wished to achieve immortality, inspite of the fact that he would never ascend the throne.

It has been found that the painter Nainsukh, son of Pandit Seu of Guler, painted several portraits of Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu. Nainsukh also seems to have worked under Raja Goverdhan Singh of Guler. The apparent similarity of the line of Nainsukh, with the line of his brother Manku, leads to the hypothesis that there was a common style evolved by the Seu family.

Another study of Raja Balwant Singh, seeing a dance performance, obviously done by Nainsukh, whose clear line defined many mobile figures

The distinctive features of the Kalam of Nainsukh can thus be clearly marked out. The drawing is sensitive as in the Mughal Miniatures, but fresh and original in its inspiration. Dark greens, soft yellows, browns, pale blues, and soft mauves appear, thus completely diluting the bright Basohli colours. The expressions of characters are well defined and there is a certain atmosphere of sensuous intimacy as the Raja sits listening to music or witnesses a dance or inspects a picture or a horse. The bare local landscape is made loveable, because it is seen in new variations. The overall handling of colour and line is subtle as it was to be more clearly later in the Guler pictures.

The background is simple, even austere, in relation to the richer atmosphere of Guler, but there is a keen human interest and the characters are individualised, the attitude being fresh, frank, even discreetly humorous.

These qualities are obvious in the painting *Raja Balwant Singh with party of musicians*, 1740 A.D., and in *Raja Balwant Singh with a dancer*. The similarities in these pictures show that Nainsukh painted them all, as well as the various incarnations of Balwant Singh, praying, writing a letter, looking out of a window etc.

Guler

Under Raja Dalip Singh (1695-1730 A.D.), pictures of a near Basohli style appeared in Guler. The trees, buildings and figures, on flat planes, with bright colours, were definitely primitive Basohli. The portrait of Dalip Singh and his son Bishan Singh are semi-Mughal, but based on the Guler Kalam.

In or about 1745 A.D., perhaps under the reign of Raja Goverdhan Singh (1730-1773 A.D.), a Mughal artist seems to have arrived in Guler. Also, one of the sons of Pandit Seu, named Manaku, and his brother Nainsukh's son were active in Guler. It is not known whether Nainsukh himself, who worked for the Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu, visited this principality, but presumably he kept his family connections and may have worked at both places intermittently.

These artist brothers, Manaku and Nainsukh, and their sons, between them, transformed the earlier primitive accent of near-Basohli into a new elegant style of extreme delicacy, which Mr. Khandalavala calls the 'pre-Kangra' idiom of Pahari Painting.

The drawing became finer, the colours became softer, as in the Mughal paletes. The details of the groupings were clarified. And the characterisation of each face was attempted. The transparent draperies of the women outlined their sensitive figures. A deliberate research into the physical charm of woman began. Both human love and love of god were delineated. The symbols of One was sought to represent the other. Love is the main theme in the finest of the pictures.

One of the typical early *Ramayana* scenes 1720 A.D., done under Raja Dalip Singh, shows the Basohli features were slightly modulated by the Guler touch. The reddish background, with strip of stream blue-white sky line, is being enveloped by the drama of battle. Inside the Lanka fort, there is the manyheaded Ravana, with his demons around him, while, outside, Rama and Lakshman, with the monkey army, have besieged the citadel. Hanuman, the monkey general, is flying across the sky to observe the preparations from above. The colours are still warm. The static architecture is derivative from Basohli. The eyes are distended, though the faces are sketched in a comparatively finer line than in the original base.

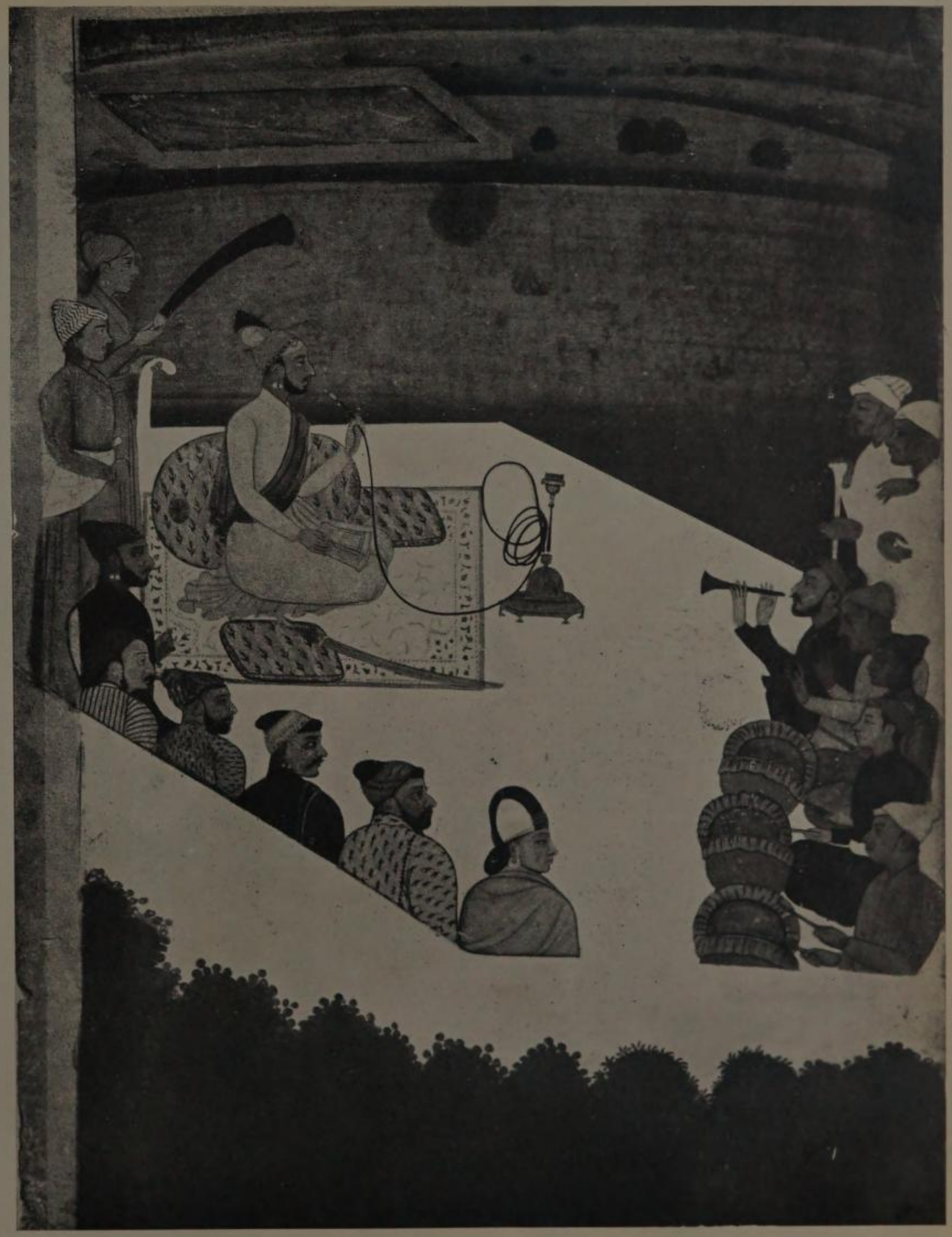
Siege of Lanka. One of the earlier series of Ramayana done in Guler from the Basohli base. The colours are now modulated beyond the original warmth into softer shades. The drawing is finer. The grouping is more complex. The architecture is influenced by the Mughal manner. The confrontation of the monkey army of Rama with the toothy demons of Ravana is presented to evoke the confrontation of right and wrong. Guler C. 1720 A.D., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, U.S.A

Raja Goverdhan Singh of Guler with ladies, is reminiscent of the Nainsukh picture from Jammu, except that the line is finer, the trees outside add a distinctive contrast to the Zenana. W. G. Archer suggests Guler provenance, about C. 1750 A.D

In the portrait of Dalip Singh's successor, *Raja Goverdhan Singh listeneing to music* 1743 A.D., there is a rectangular pavilion, placed against the old rounded hills, but with thick individualised almond trees below. The grouping of the courtiers and the musicians is dramatically posed. The palette is softer.

The later portrait of *Raja Goverdhan Singh*, c. 1750 A.D., is even more refined than the 1743 A.D., picture. The new picture shows the Raja as a mature man, obviously involved in a musical duet with the ladies in the palace. The pavilion is almost reminiscent of the one painted by Nainsukh for *Raja Balwant with the party of musicians*, Jammu, 1748 A.D. The half-cut bushy tree, the almond blossoms and the flowers outside the airhouse are rendered with a delicate brush. The females are as lyrically conceived as the foliage outside.

Raja Goverdhan Singh of Guler listening to music, shows the fusion of the Mughal kalam with the Pahari contours. The space is marked out adroitly in the Hindu manner, as jutting out of the picture C. 1743 A.D



In *Siva and Parvati*, c. 1755 A.D., the sweep of the brush is broader, though the grace and harmony of the Kalam is maintained, as also the intimacy of human feeling. But in the *Toilet*, c. 1770 A.D., the earlier fine line has yielded to the bolder, more dramatic line. The colours are emotional. The *Srinagar Rasa* is emphasised. We are on the verge of the transition to Kangra.

The Guler Kalam was to exercise an important influence on almost all the later painting in the sister states, by the extraordinary grace which now came to be infused into Pahari Paintings.

Siva and Parvati is an idyllic picture of the handsome god, delicate Parvati, with their sons, Ganesha and Kartakiya, and the Vahans, lion, bull and peacock, assembled as one happy family in a Guler style, C. 1755 A.D

The theme of these paintings, whether court scenes or religious pictures, is love, and the charm of women. As Dr. Coomaraswamy put it: 'Their ethos is unique: what Chinese art achieved for landscape, is here accomplished for human love. Here, if never and nowhere in the world, the western gates are opened wide. The arms of lovers are about each other's necks, eye meets eye, the whispering sakhis bound by the sound of Krishna's flute and the elements, stand still to hear the *Ragas* and *Raginis*. This art is only concerned with the realities of life: above all, with passionate love-service conceived as the means and symbol of all union.'

The spirit of the sports of love is in the burning and melting, the union and the yearning, suggested in the verses :

'Gopal (Krishna) hath embraced me and my body
knoweth no pain,
He kissed me and all my sorrow is winged away into
nothingness,
But now alas that I have set my eyes on his face,
There is no rest for me - only an endless longing.'

—*Gujerati verse*

Lady by the Lake is another fine lyrical painting in the Guler style, showing fusion of the sleek Mughal line, soft pastel shades, with the environment of the Pahari area. The cylindrical bodies of the females and their hair styles are parallel with 18th century erotic Mughal painting in Agra and Delhi. Guler C. 1755 A.D

Kangra

Under Raja Sansar Chand (1775-1823 A.D.), in Kangra (35 miles away from Guler), came, at first a new vigorous flowering of the art of painting, obviously inspired by the fine creative work of Guler.

Sansar Chand was only ten years old when he came to the throne. But he was a masterful, young ruler and soon achieved supremacy over his neighbours and set up a dazzling court.

The English traveller, Moorecraft, has given us a good account of Sansar Chand's intimate life :

'Raja Sansar Chand spends the early part of the day in the ceremonies of his religion. The evenings are devoted to singing and nautching, in which the performers reeite most commonly Brij Basha songs related to Krishna.'

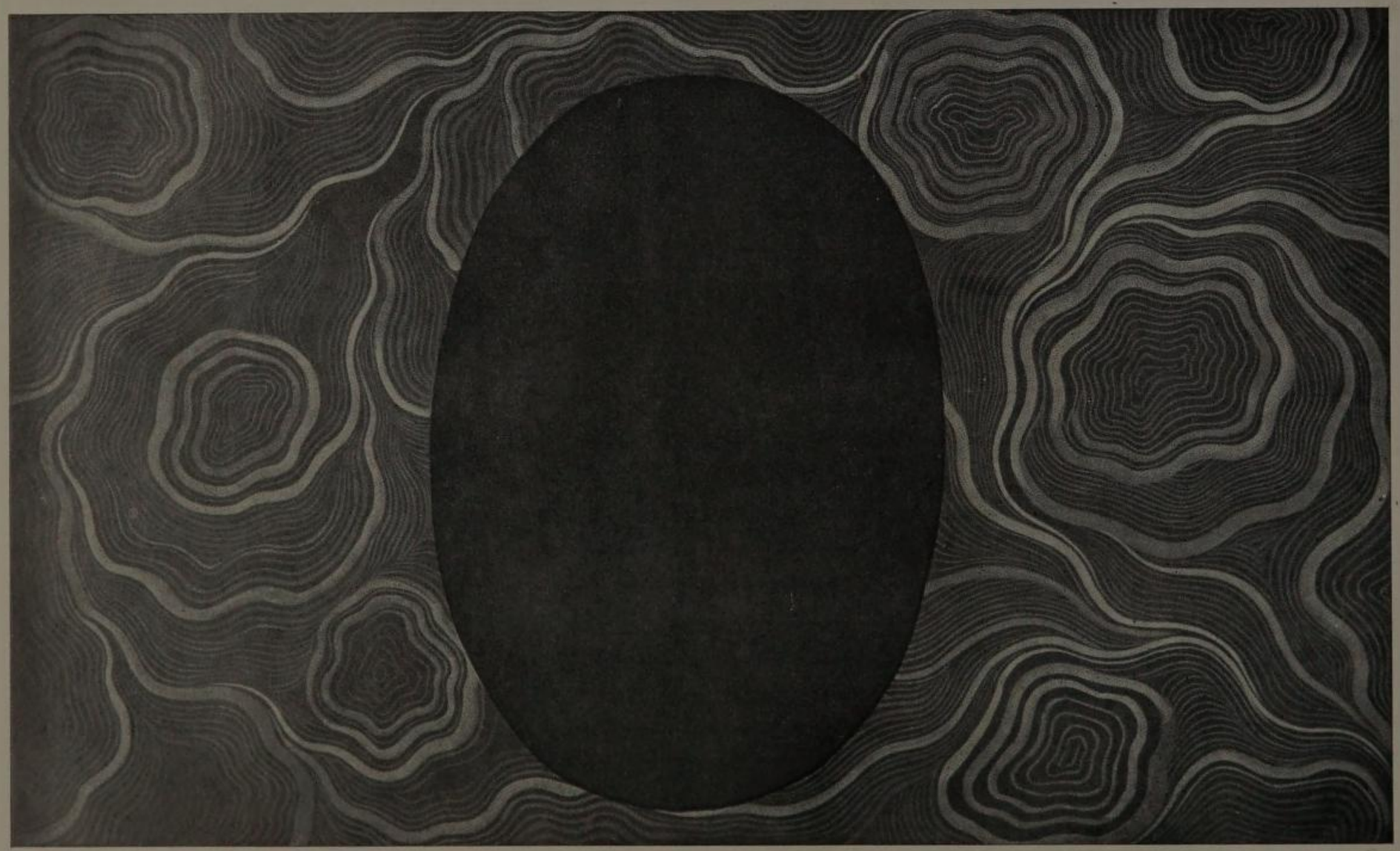
It would seem that Raja Sansar Chand wished himself into the moods of the love God and enacted the exploits of Krishna in his own life. Naturally, the artists of his court began to emphasise the dalliance of Krishna with Radha and the milkmaids.

There are three artists of Sansar Chand's court, whose names are known to us: Fattu, Parkhu, and Kushan Lal (or Khushala) who is said to have been the nephew of Nainsukh. But no signed works by these painters are available.

It is likely that these and other painters migrated from nearby Guler where painting had dwindled after the death of Raja Goverdhan Singh in 1770 A.D.

Storm of Love, is rendered here in the symbolic picture of the lady running for shelter in the palace, outwardly, because of impending duststorm, but really because she is overcome by loneliness: Slightly artificial but typical of the decorative style under Raja Sansar Chand: Kangra. 1775-1823 A.D

The Lady looking in the mirror, was a familiar theme in Hindu tradition. The god Vishnu turned into Mohini contemplates her perfection of beauty. Here the preparation for love, after the intricate toilet, is presented in a lovely composition where ardent love is indicated by the preparation of the body for the occasion. Kangra, C. 1825 A.D.



The Cosmic egg represents the Zero, the one absolute, Brahman, from which all creation begins. Decorative treatment of ancient symbol, with conchshell waves, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras, C. 1740 A.D

This abstract illustration to the *Bhagwad Purana* C. 1740 A.D., shows the primaeval egg, or the One Brahman, afloat on the waters. The remarkable interpretation of an ancient concept shows how deeply Indian traditional thought was imbedded in folk consciousness. The exquisite conch shell treatment of the waves tends to be decorative, but this is an important picture showing the Pahari painter's genius for rendering intellectual ideas as well as romantic themes.

Sheltering in the Rain is a pretty picture of the Sansar Chand period. The metaphor of the female clinging to Krishna, in nervous agitation at the prospect of overpowering dark clouds and rain is rendered in fine brushwork: Kangra, Late 18th century Punjab Museum, Chandigarh

At any rate, the *Bhagvata Purana* pictures of the Modi collection, done in Kangra, seem to be the Kangra extensions of the Guler style. The old Guler characterisation is present, but the sensitive line of women's faces, which was perfected at Guler, is here. And the simplicity of construction and the delicacy of Guler, is being given a strange new rhythm, in which the landscape is being absorbed into human action.

This lyrical charm was to be the dominating aspect of the earlier masterpieces of the Kangra school. Graceful girls gliding with bent heads, in musical contours, and blown skirts, are drawn in fine, sweeping lines, radiating the sensual lure of woman. She is waiting for her lover, as she has seen the gathering storm.

She is looking into the mirror and doing herself up in readiness for his coming. Or she is sporting in the role of Radha with Krishna. In fact, the innocence of the budding heart of a woman entering into the life of passion, is infused, by the Pahari painters, with a tenderness, which reflects their complete absorption in love, as the only ideal of life.

The 'poetry by analogy' was borrowed from the Krishna cult, but the rhythmic lines, and the soft colours, do not illustrate the verse, as the verse does not describe the pictures.

Of course, the colours are used symbolically to indicate the emotions. The Mughal rectangular frame, with its rigid geometric planes, is used to offset the movement of the figures. The languid charm of some of the pictures painted under Sansar Chand, matures the experiments in Guler and the Mughal prototypes, which had brought an important impulse to Pahari Painting.

But in the mature years of his life, Raja Sansar Chand was obsessed with his own image. The painters obviously turned flatterers and began to pile up Darbar scenes. Also, they polished off many love pictures with an easy facility which the courtiers encouraged. The quantitative addition of this mass of paintings, over and above the resilient pictures of the early part of Sansar Chand's reign, made for a decorative art, which somewhat marred the tradition.

During Sansar Chand's mature years, the Gurkhas invaded Kangra. So, for some years, this monarch had to live in hiding. Later, he asked the help of the lion of the Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, to fight the Gurkhas. The Sikh armies assisted him, but, then Ranjit Singh insisted on exercising sovereignty over Kangra. Sansar Chand continued to patronise painters. But, after his death in 1823 A.D., the Kangra Kalam seems to have lost its primary inspiration.

Chamba

About the middle of the seventeenth century, Raja Prithvi Singh of Chamba built, in the remote township of Brahmor, a palace with certain decorations on the doors. These have been identified by Dr. Hermann Goetz as in the Basohli style, with the sharp features and receding foreheads. The wood carvings and bronzes of Chamba also resemble the sleek forms of early Basohli, with elongated slim postures, and may have come from a common source. Raja Prithvi Singh was married to a Basohli princess. And it is likely that the Basohli kalam travelled to Brahmor and Chamba and mixed with the local folk style there. Certain link pictures between Basohli and Chamba have also been recently found.

The connection between a *Love Scene* in wood in Brahmor and the painting *Lovers* in Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba, has been traced by Rajkumar Maneck. This primitivist idiom was worked upon in Chamba by the painter, Lehru, into a modest court art, firmly based on local worship of the Krishna cult.

The Bhagvata paintings show here the transformation of the folk base into skilful compositions of figures, landscapes and variegated moods.

Vishnu killing Sankhasur, is a dynamic painting, with skilful rendering of a murder scene amidst the agitation in the landscape

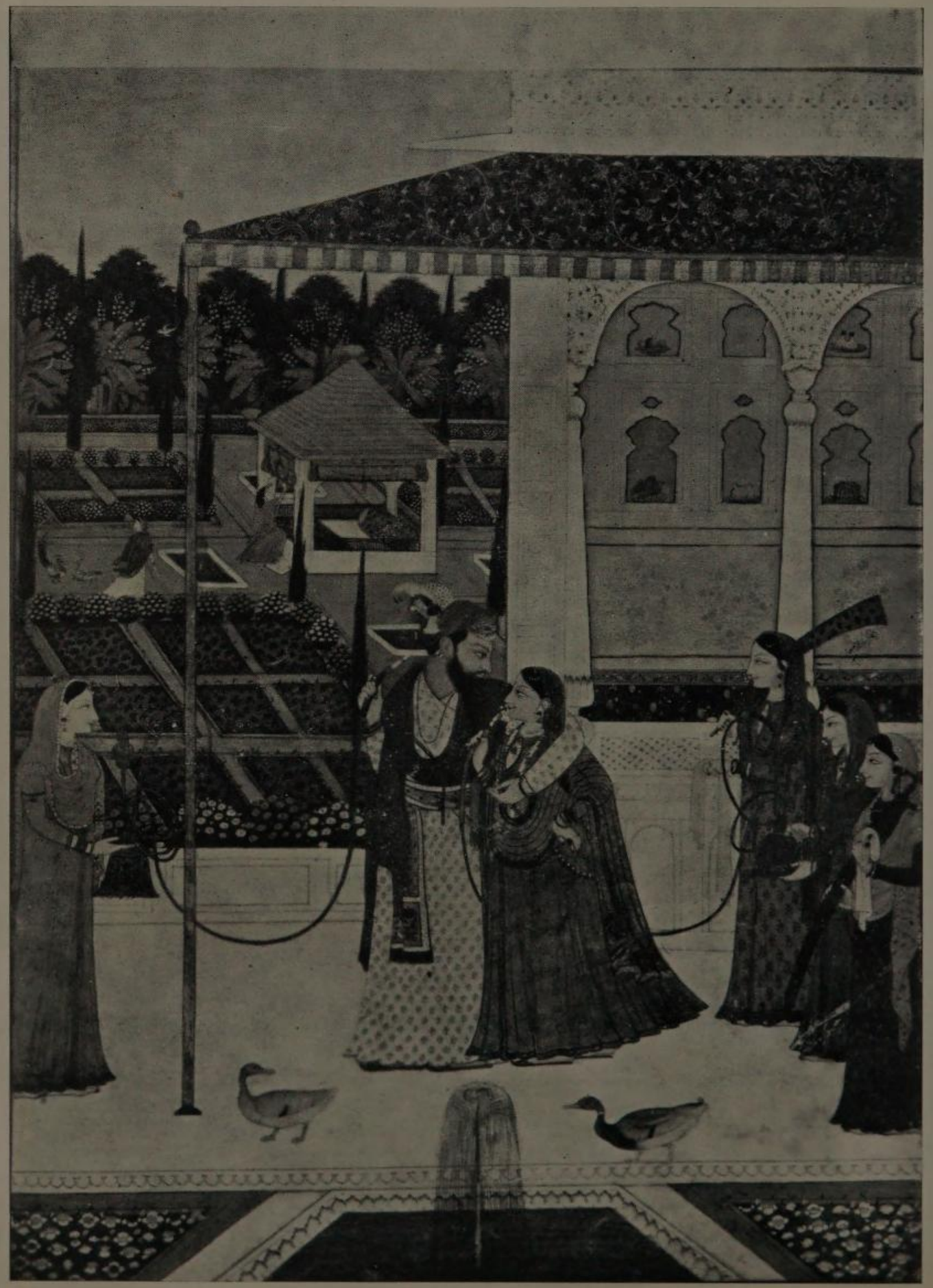
The primitivist lovers in the wooden panel from Brahmor leads to The Lovers in Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba. The development shows the folk base of Pahari art.

Rama, Sita and Laxman—a painting from the Ramayana series in the Bhuri Singh Museum, shows the development of a Guler inspired Chamba set, obviously from the hand of one of Pandit Seu's descendants: The treatment of the trees, the rocks, with the fine line of the figures is reminiscent of the fusion already achieved in the Pahari style of the Mughal and Hindu kalams: 1764-94 A.D

In about 1765 A.D., a Guler artist, name Nikka, seems to have appeared in Chamba.

From then on under Raja Raj Singh (1764-94 A.D.), mature painting seems to have flourished in this far off Himalayan kingdom. The palaces and temples were also filled with wall paintings.

The figures in Chamba paintings retain the grace of Guler, but are moulded with square, heavy jaws. The stature of the Chamba type is also short and squat, though drawn in bolder line. The colours, however, are mellower than the bright Basohli pigments. The backgrounds are worked out with care and reflect the luxury of the palace. The vitality of the original folk style figures gives place to a new type of leisurely, comfortable domesticated presence. These distinctive features clearly mark out the Chamba paintings from the other hill styles. Also, as wall painting and miniature painting were carried on here, almost side by side, the wall paintings were often enlarged miniatures and the miniatures often remained clearly reduced murals. Except that, as the brushes used for the miniatures were fine and more delicate, and those used for the walls were thicker, the two techniques were quite distinct.



Raja Raj Singh of Chamba, (1764-94 A.D.), with his Rani is a composition in the grandiose mood of later Kangra style under Sansar Chand: Raja Raj Singh defeated the Jammu army and conquered Basohli, emulated the example of his contemporary Raja Sansar Chand 1775-1823 A.D

Tehri Garhwal

Raja Aniruddh Chand, the son of Sansar Chand, migrated to Tehri Garhwal after the Sikhs made it difficult for him to stay in Kangra. He married off his two sisters to Sudarshan Shah of Tehri (1815-1859 A.D.) rather than give them to the Sikhs, who had demanded them for the handsome Raja Hira Singh, son of the Minister Raja Dhian Singh, who was favourite of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Aniruddh Chand had taken many paintings with him, which probably formed part of the wedding dowry for his sisters. Perhaps, some painters of Kangra also went with him.

We have not much evidence about the Tehri Garhwal school. But there are available in the collection of the Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal some of the loveliest pictures of the Pahari style to be seen anywhere.

Most of these are Nayikas or heroines. One of them, the *Utka Nayika* in the British Museum collection, is a masterpiece of rare grace and refinement. The sensuous line of the drawing, and the vivid colouring, seem to suggest a heavenly landscape, in which the heroine spends harrowing moments waiting for her lover. This picture could only have been the product of a mature tradition, from a sensibility of the highest order.

Apart from the imported pictures, certain works of the local artist, Chetu stand out, for their mature mastery of the brush. The *Rape of Yadav Women*, in the series, is one of the rare provincial masterpieces which show that patronage of art existed in Tehri for some time. And there are some pictures by Mola Ram which were painted locally and are clever echoes of the late Kangra style.

The Utka Nayika found in Tehri Garhwal, is a masterpiece of the decorative art of the Pahari area. The heroine waiting for the lover in the elysian background of the woods is a lovely rendering of the mood of waiting. Perhaps this late Kangra early 19th century picture was taken to Garhwal

Other Hill States

Similar but minor kalams flourished in Nurpur, Mandi, Suket, Bilaspur, Nalagarh and Arki. The local Rajas of these small states were proud Rajputs, and followed the pattern of life of their bigger neighbours. And they all had their own court bards, musicians and craftsmen. Whenever an artist of talent arose among the hereditary artisans, great work was produced. Otherwise a good deal of copying went on. The fact that all these paintings deal with modes of life, which have passed away, often deceives the tourist in search of the exotic. And the present-day middle class people collect pretty pictures to adorn their contemporary emptiness.

At the end of the 18th century, the Central Mughal power was weakening. Most of the artists had emigrated to the various provincial courts of the feudal noblemen, who had established independent dynasties, or taken to other crafts like gold and silversmithy or the building industry. As these dynasties also decayed, and the Portuguese, Dutch, British and the French soldiers fought each other, to conquer India for themselves, there was chaos. So the hereditary artisans and craftsmen drifted, wherever they could secure patronage or employment. Thus various Bazar kalams sprang up, in Lahore, Deccan, Tanjore, Mysore, Lucknow and in Patna etc.

This wall painting from Nurpur is typical of the folk base of all Pahari Princedoms: The courts in the city states accepted stylisation, under Mughal influence, of the rich primitivist paintings by which the people lived: Early 19th century

16. Painting under the Sikhs

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1803-1839 A.D.) some painters from the Punjab hills, obviously came down to live in Lahore and Amritsar and were given official patronage by the court, as well as grants of land. Therefore, the paintings of the early 19th century, under Sikh patronage, cannot be called Sikh paintings, though some Sikh artists were involved.

They are mostly in the style of the Kangra kalam, except that portraits become more frequent. Apparently, the vainglorious Sikh noblemen, and generals, wished to have their heroic features immortalised. The delicacy of the Kangra line continued to be practised. And some of these profiles like *Ranjit Singh* are extremely well done. For instance, the *Portrait of Dhayan Singh*, in the Rothenstein Collection, is as good as anything in this *genre* done under the Mughals. But most of the portraits are attempts at glorification of the new masters, mechanically contrived to show grandeur, without much sincerity of feeling.

A few very fine love scenes were done, ostensibly by Kangra artists. One of these important pictures shows, possibly, *Raja Hira Singh with a Kangra woman*. The line is delicate as in the old Guler pictures. The symbolism of pairs of birds is used. The atmosphere of the lovely rainy weather of the month of Shravan is reproduced with massed clouds. The Lahore court is learning to live gracefully.

Kishan Singh of Lahore painted lovely females on glass. This technique had probably come from the West, but Kishan Singh adopted it with distinction.

And another painter, Kapur Singh, did a number of miniatures, also obviously under European influence, but with a remarkable gift for action drawing.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839 A.D.) on horseback. Painting under the Sikhs, C. 1835-40 A.D., is a formalised equestrian study : The Maharaja is dressed in yellow costume, with a black shield on his back, seated astride a white stallion, perhaps on his way to the spring festival of Basant

At the same time, the hereditary Kangra artists went on producing repetitions of the religious pictures of Sansar Chand's time.

After the earthquake of Kangra in 1905, the local traditions of the hills died. And the kalams of Lahore and Amritsar degenerated into bazaar style pictures, readily sold to the pilgrims.

Sikh youth in Dalliance with the Pahari Lady, Kangra, C. 1835 A.D : shows the model from the Pahari area for the Sikh paintings. Emulates the sophistication of the court of Sansar Chand

17. Bazar Painting

OUDH

During the end of the 18th century, in the region of Oudh flourished an independent kingdom founded by Burhan-ul-Mulk, the Nawab Wazir of the Mughals. The princes of the house encouraged the arts. And a branch of the Delhi Mughal Kalam began to be practised in Faizabad the first capital, and then in Lucknow, which became capital of Oudh afterwards. There were some miniatures done in the early 18th century, celebrating the love lives of Shuja-ud-Dowlah and Asaf-ud-Dowlah. Contrary to the general belief that miniature painting in the 18th century became decadent, through the weaknesses of the Central dynasty, the early pictures of Oudh, among them a *Portrait* of *Bahu Begum*, show extraordinary charm and skill. Also, certain miniatures done under Bahu Begum, now in the State Museum, Berlin, seem to have been rendered with a new mastery and finish.

Later, however, the Nawabs began to prefer oil portraits of themselves. And the influence of this European technique almost ended the eloquent Mughal style profile. Also the early 19th century princes were utterly vain and allowed a good deal of vulgarity to creep in.

Wajid Ali Shah, the last king of Oudh, tried to restore the purity of the mediaeval techniques in dance and music and poetry. But Oudh was already under attack from the British and was annexed by force in 1856 A.D.

Portrait of princess, possibly Bahu Begum, in the late 18th century style, which travelled from Agra and Delhi to the provinces

Portrait of an old gentleman in the Patna bazar style influenced by European realistic painting : Late 19th century

Typical group in the exotic bazar style influenced by European patrons: Late 19th century

Patna

Some families of artisans seem to have settled in the later half of the 19th century in Patna, Bihar. The patronage they received was mainly from the officers of the 'John Company', who wanted miniature portraits of themselves in the European style. As the Indian painters got to work, they produced a hybrid Indian-English manner, which is sometimes charming, but mostly feelingless. Some of the paintings of flowers and birds, done by these artists, and those in Calcutta, for Lord Wellesley's albums, (now in India office Library) are extremely well done, in a composite style reminiscent of the naturalism under Jehangir.

Kalighat

Among the bazar styles, the one which has attracted most attention in recent years, has been the kind of action drawings on religious and secular themes, produced near the Kali temple in Calcutta.

It seems that in the early days of the 19th century, when Calcutta was growing, some families of craftsmen, who used to paint Patua scrolls on religious themes in the villages, came to live in the city near Kalighat. They sold their pictures for a copper each to the pilgrims at the fairs. So they had to turn them out very quickly. A few broad sweeps of the brush, filled in with soft water colours, or sometimes not even filled in, and the picture was ready for the market. Also, apart from the images of Kali or Shiva, or Vishnu or Krishna, the Kalighat painters took in humorous themes like the modern husband beating his wife, or the fantastic red faced Englishman, or the rotund Bengali Babu with his umbrella.

And they succeeded in producing near abstract pictures with a certain verve. But the hundreds of slick designs are mostly amusing and lack the masterly touch and the rich colour which is obvious in the original Patuas. The curvacious line of India, however, came through even in the vulgar Pats, with some of the old vivacity.

The broad sweep of the curvacious line of the mediaeval period survived in the Kalighat Pat drawings until the late 19th-20th centuries

Orissan Paper Icons and Playing Cards

The highly coloured, conventional contemporary paper icons of the deity of the Puri temple, Jagan Nath, his brother Balaram and his sister Subhadra, are the survivals of an ancient tradition of painting in Orissa.

There had been some ornamentation in colour on lime plaster in the Khandigiri caves of the 1st century B.C., which are now lost. Of the post-Ajanta period, there is the fragment of painting on the ceilings of a rock shelter at Sitabhingi in the ex-Keonjargrah state. Then came the palm leaf manuscript of the late mediaeval 17th century. The *Gita Govinda* in the Bhubaneshwar Museum is an example of this style. The pictures in this have affiliations with the linear Jain Kalpasutra figures. During the 18th century the Hindu Puranic texts and the erotic poetry came to be illustrated, in a kind of narrative running strip, like the Jain frescoes in Tiruparuti-kundram. Later in the 19th century, decorativeness and overornamentation took the place of genuine feeling for bright colours.

The demands of the festival markets have led to the supply of the thousands of rectangular, square or round paper icons, sometimes in charming reds, greens and purples, with the figures of the Puri shrine on them. The tradition of painting circular playing cards, which was practised in Orissa, as in Rajasthan, has survived here, though these are mostly bought as curios rather than for use.

Early 20th century art here, as elsewhere, decayed into photography, revival of classicism and then into the contemporary struggle for identity.

Colourful folle painting from Orissa, where the strong colour sense has survived right into our own times

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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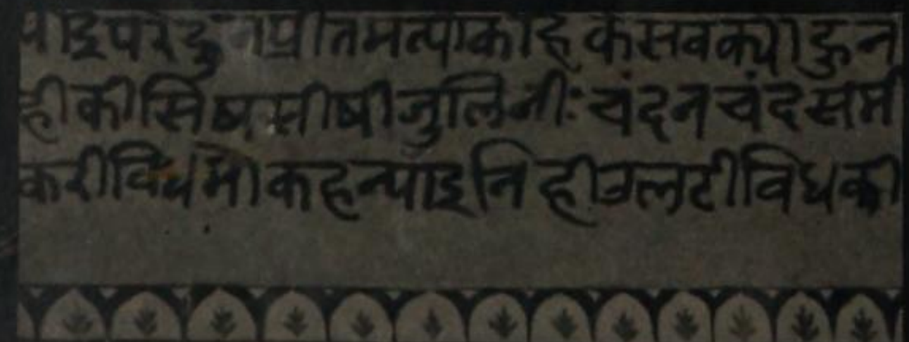
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